Dips and dunks

A selection of tempting dips and dunks, whether simple or exotic, make good eating anytime. With the microwave to speed up preparation and cooking, they can be ready in double-quick time.

Dips and dunks are quick to make using the microwave and always popular. They look especially attractive served with the dip in a bowl in the centre of a platter and the dunks arranged round it.

Serve them as a speedy snack, delicious party-time nibble (double the quantities given for a party), or as a well-balanced main meal — you'll find some of the dips and dunks filling enough to satisfy even the heartiest appetites; others less so for those who may be counting calories.

Clockwise: *Cheese and Onion Dip, Hurried Curry Dip, Salami Dip and Cucumber Yoghurt Dip*

Mix and match the various dips and dunks here according to personal preference, selecting flavours and textures that complement one another. In keeping with today's trend towards healthy eating you may prefer to serve a selection of raw vegetable dunks — carrot, celery, cucumber, radishes, cauliflower and broccoli florets and spring onions all make crunchy, vitamin-packed accompaniments.

For a rather more substantial meal serve dips with bread sticks, or fingers of warmed pitta bread.

Cucumber yoghurt dip

2½ mins

Standing time: none

½ cucumber, unpeeled, halved lengthways, seeded and grated
½ small onion, finely chopped
½ small green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
75ml / 3fl oz low-fat mayonnaise
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 3-4 (MAKES 275ml / ½pt)

1 Pat the grated cucumber dry on absorbent paper. Reserve.
2 Put the onion, green pepper and butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until tender.
3 Stir in the grated cucumber, mayonnaise, yoghurt, Worcestershire sauce and seasoning. Serve (chilled, if liked) with a selection of raw vegetables for 'dunking'.

VARIATION
Minted Cucumber Dip: omit the Worcestershire sauce and add 2.5ml / ½tsp fresh chopped mint.

Slimmer's notes

Omit the butter or margarine and cook the onion and green pepper in 15-30ml / 1-2tbls water in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until softened. This makes 95 Cal / 400kJ per portion.

Hurried curry dip

2 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz curd cheese
30ml / 2tbls milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp curry paste or powder
2.5ml / ½tsp caster sugar
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt

SERVES 3-4 (MAKES 275ml / ½pt)

1 Put the curd cheese in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds or until softened.
2 Beat in the milk, curry paste or powder, sugar, garlic and seasoning and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes until the flavours have blended.
3 Stir in the yoghurt and serve warm (or chilled) with raw vegetables for 'dunking'.

VARIATION
This recipe gives a mild dip. Add extra curry paste or powder for a more fiery flavour.

Salami dip

1 min

Standing time: none

½ bunch spring onions, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
225g / 8oz curd cheese
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
50g / 2oz salami, chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls creamed horseradish
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4 (MAKES 425ml / ¾pt)

1 Put the onions, garlic and butter in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
2 Beat in the cheese, yoghurt, salami, parsley, horseradish, sugar and seasoning. Serve chilled, if liked, with crisps or crackers.

Cheese and onion dip

4 mins

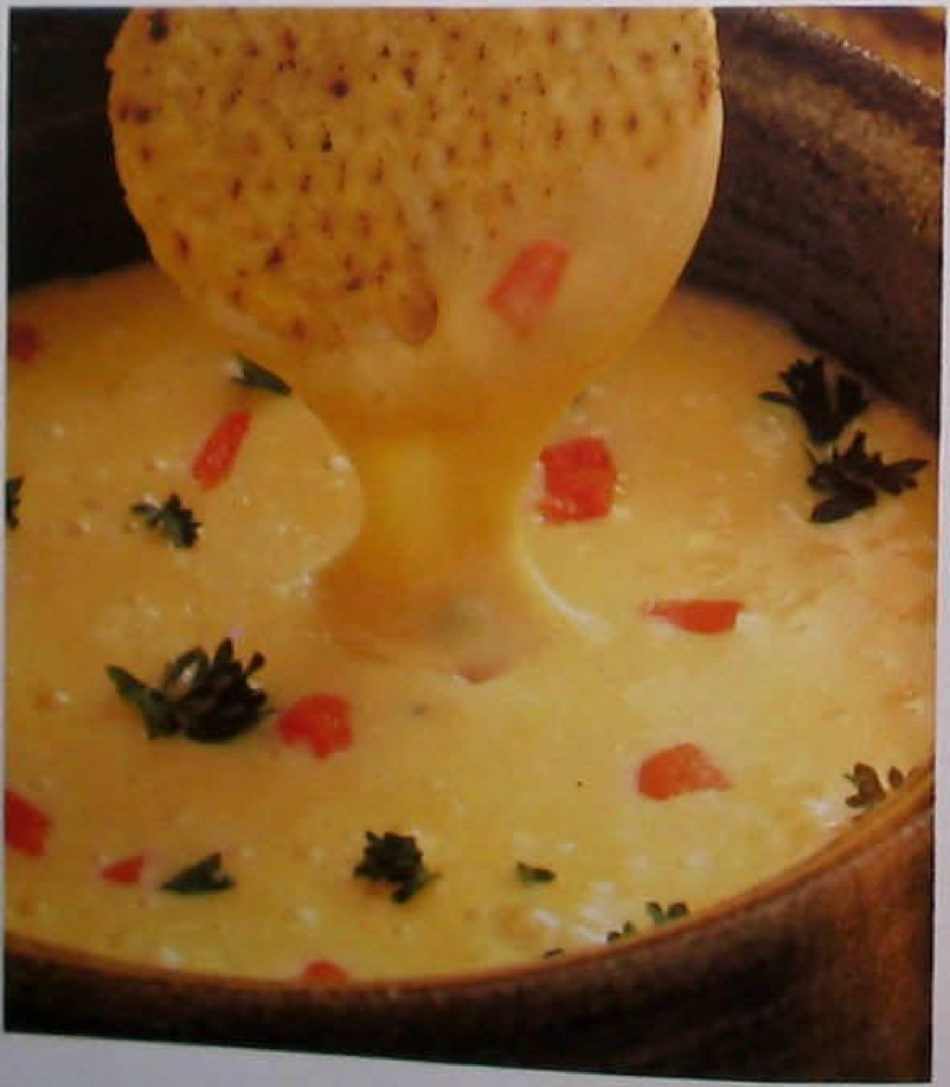
Standing time: none

1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
275g / 10oz Cheddar cheese, diced
15ml / 1tbls milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground mace
salt and pepper

SERVES 3-4 (MAKES 275ml / ½pt)

1 Place the garlic, onion and oil in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until the onion softens.
2 Stir in the cheese, milk, mace and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes stirring twice, until the cheese melts and the mixture is smooth and heated through. Serve hot with crisp savoury crackers, corn chips or raw vegetables.

Cheese and Beer Dip



Cheese and beer dip

4
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

400g / 14oz firm processed cheese spread, diced
125ml / 4fl oz pale ale
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt
pepper
15ml / 1tbls drained, canned chopped pimiento
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4 (MAKES 425ml / ¾pt)

Microwaving the dip

Place *the cheese in a casserole and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes or until melted. Stir once.*

Whisk *in the ale, garlic and seasoning. Cook at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot; stir once. Stand 5 minutes. Add pimiento and parsley.*

All-in-one-style franks

5
mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb frankfurters
275ml / ½pt barbecue sauce
1.2cm / ½in fresh root ginger, grated

SERVES 8

Cook's notes

To make your own barbecue sauce you can combine 75ml / 3fl oz tomato sauce, 150ml / ¼pt fresh orange juice, 15ml / 1tbls soy sauce, 30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste and 2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour dissolved in 15ml / 1tbls water. Follow instructions below.

Microwaving All-in-one-style Franks

Cut *frankfurters into chunky slices. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until heated.*

Stir *in frankfurters; re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes; stir once. Stand 3 minutes. Serve hot, on cocktail sticks.*

Quickie mustard dip

2 mins

Standing time: none

15-30ml / 1-2tbls made English
or French mustard
90ml / 6tbls dry white wine
2 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
pinch of salt

SERVES 4-6 (MAKES 275ml / ½pt)

1 Blend the mustard and wine together in a bowl until smooth; beat in the eggs, sugar and salt.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes, whisking well every 30 seconds, until the sauce coats the back of a spoon. Serve hot with crisp savoury crackers or cocktail frankfurters, if preferred.

Above right:
Quickie Mustard Dip

Sausage nuggets

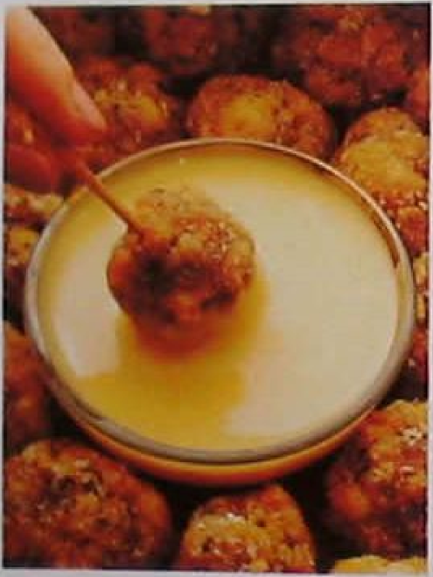
6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

85g / 3oz packet sage and onion
stuffing mix, made up
following packet directions,
but using only half the quantity
of water
100g / 4oz mature Cheddar
cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
225g / 8oz beef sausagemeat
100g / 4oz fresh breadcrumbs
good pinch of ground turmeric

SERVES 4-6 (MAKES 35 NUGGETS)

1 Beat together the stuffing mix, cheese, egg, sausagemeat and 50g / 2oz of the breadcrumbs.
2 Using lightly floured hands, form the mixture into 35 small balls, about 2.5cm / 1in big.
3 Mix together the remaining breadcrumbs and turmeric and use to coat the balls.
4 Arrange balls in a circle around the edge of a large round plate and space remainder in centre.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until just firm. Stand for 3 minutes. Serve hot with Quickie Mustard Dip (see above).



Chilli tomato dip

6½ mins

Standing time: none

1 large onion, finely chopped
397g / 14oz can tomatoes, drained
and chopped
100g / 4oz pickled mild green
chillies, well drained and
chopped
45ml / 3tbls natural yoghurt
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground turmeric
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese, diced
salt (optional)

SERVES 4 (MAKES 425ml / ¾pt)

1 Put the onion and tomatoes in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until onion is tender. Drain off excess liquid.
2 Stir in the chillies, yoghurt, turmeric and cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until the cheese melts and the mixture is hot, stirring twice during cooking.
3 Taste and add salt, if necessary. Serve hot with tortilla chips or raw vegetable sticks.

Above left: *Sausage Nuggets*
Below: *Chilli Tomato Dip*

Nifty crab nibbles

5 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Skewer these tasty 'dunks' on cocktail sticks and serve warm with Cranberry Dip (see recipe below) or a selection of relishes.

170g / 6oz can crabmeat, drained
½ bunch spring onions, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp anchovy essence, or sauce
225g / 8oz cream cheese
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground turmeric
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley

SERVES 4-5 (MAKES ABOUT 22 NIBBLES)

1 Put the crabmeat in a bowl with the spring onions, anchovy essence, cream cheese and lemon juice; mix well. Using floured hands, form the mixture into balls, 2.5cm / 1in in diameter.
2 Mix together the breadcrumbs, turmeric and parsley and use to evenly coat the crab balls. Arrange balls in a circle around the edge of a large round plate and place the remainder in centre of plate.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until just firm. Stand for 3 minutes.

Cranberry dip

5 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz fresh or canned cranberries
50ml / 2fl oz water
75g / 3oz dark brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp malt vinegar

SERVES 4-5

1 Put the cranberries in a bowl with the water and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until tender.
2 Purée in a blender, then sieve if liked. Stir in the sugar and vinegar. Return to bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until heated through. Serve hot with Nifty Crab Nibbles.

Florentine dip

7 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz frozen leaf spinach
6 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and coarsely chopped
½ small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
225g / 8oz low-fat soft cheese
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped

SERVES 4-6 (MAKES 425ml / ¾pt)

1 Microwave frozen spinach on a plate at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Press spinach between two plates to thoroughly squeeze out as much of the juice as possible. Chop the spinach coarsely.
2 Put the bacon, onion and garlic in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until the bacon is cooked, stirring once.
3 Add the spinach, cheese, seasoning and walnuts and mix together until all ingredients are well combined.
4 Chill for 15 minutes before serving with savoury crackers.

Above: *Nifty Crab Nibbles*
Right: *Florentine Dip*

Microwaving pears

With the aid of the microwave cooker, poaching and baking pears for sumptuous desserts becomes an easy task. Ten minutes for an elegant dessert like Pears in Red Wine is a boon for any busy hostess.

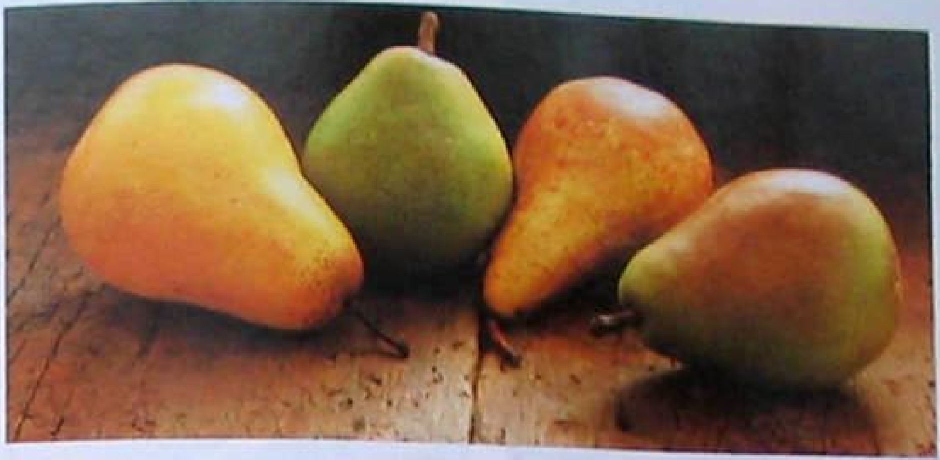
Pears for cooking should be just ripe, then they will keep their shape well during the speedy microwave cooking method, and their texture will be tender but still firm. Because pears ripen from the inside out, they develop their best flavour when ripened off the tree. So they are picked when mature, but still hard. There is no need to wait until the surface is completely soft to eat or cook pears — otherwise the centre may be brown and mealy. They are ready when the stem end yields if gently pressed. Ripe pears are best used the same day, as they do not keep well.

Delicious for cooked desserts, sweet tarts and pies, pears make a simple family pudding or an elegant dinner party dessert. If you have a surplus supply of pears, or spot a bargain in the shops, turn them into a delicious spiced Pear Preserve, see page 727.

Once pears have been peeled or cut they discolour very quickly, so prepare them just before cooking. Poach pears in a syrup or sauce or brush with a coating for baking. If you are not cooking the pears immediately, simply brush the cut or peeled surface with lemon juice.

Pears in Red Wine

Types of pear



Pictured left to right: *Williams or Bartlett pears are bell-shaped with a thin skin which is red or yellow and may be blushed; Comice pears are round with thick, yellow green skin and some russeting; Conference pears have a long 'neck' and dark green to yellow skin with some crimson-coloured russeting; Packham pears range from yellow to green, the colour is no indication of ripeness. Select firm fruit just softening at the stem end. Superficial blemishes do not affect quality.*

How to keep pears

Ripen *pears at room temperature until the stem end yields to gentle pressure. Open plastic bags, to allow air to circulate. Store ripened pears, uncovered, in the crisper compartment of the refrigerator and use quickly.*

Pears in red wine

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

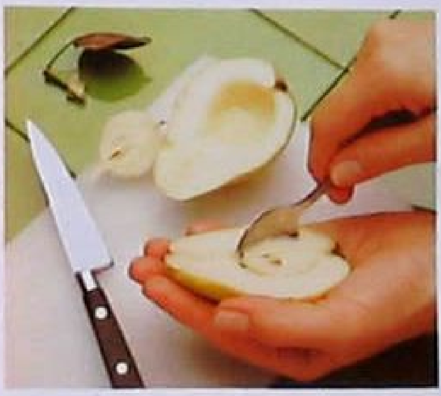
An elegant dessert made in only 10 minutes.

250ml / 8fl oz dry red wine
225g / 8oz sugar
1 cinnamon stick
6 Williams or Packham pears, peeled, cored, with stalks
single cream, to serve (optional)

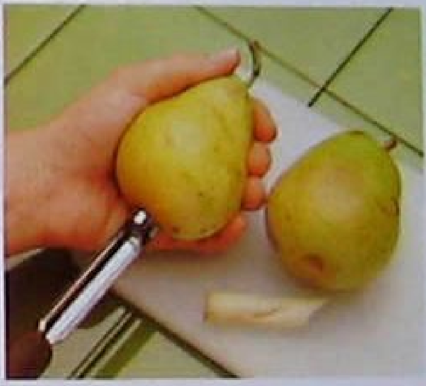
SERVES 6

1 Place the wine, sugar and cinnamon stick in a large, deep bowl, stirring well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until the mixture boils.
2 Stand the pears upright in the red wine syrup, arranging five pears around the edge of the dish and one in the centre. Baste liberally with the syrup.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes, or until the pears are tender, turning the dish once. Leave to stand for 5 minutes then serve hot or leave until cold, then chill for 2-3 hours. Turn the pears in the syrup occasionally to colour evenly.
4 Remove the cinnamon stick. Decorate with non-poisonous leaves and serve with cream.

How to halve and core pears



Remove *the stalk then halve the pear from the neck end. Use a teaspoon to remove the core, making a circular movement with your wrist.*



Core *whole pears using an apple corer. Work into the pear from the base, only as far as the core, then carefully work the core free.*

Pear preserve

11 mins

Standing time: none

800g / 1¾lb Packham pears, peeled, halved, cored, and finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
700g / 1½lb sugar
pinch of mixed spice
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
75ml / 3fl oz liquid pectin *

MAKES 1L / 1¾pt

1 Mix the pears with the lemon juice, sugar, spice and lemon zest in a large heatproof bowl.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes or until the mixture comes to a full rolling boil, stirring four times; boil 1 minute more.
3 Stir in the pectin, blending well. Skim any foam from the surface with a slotted spoon. Ladle into hot, sterilized jars, seal, label and store for up to six months.

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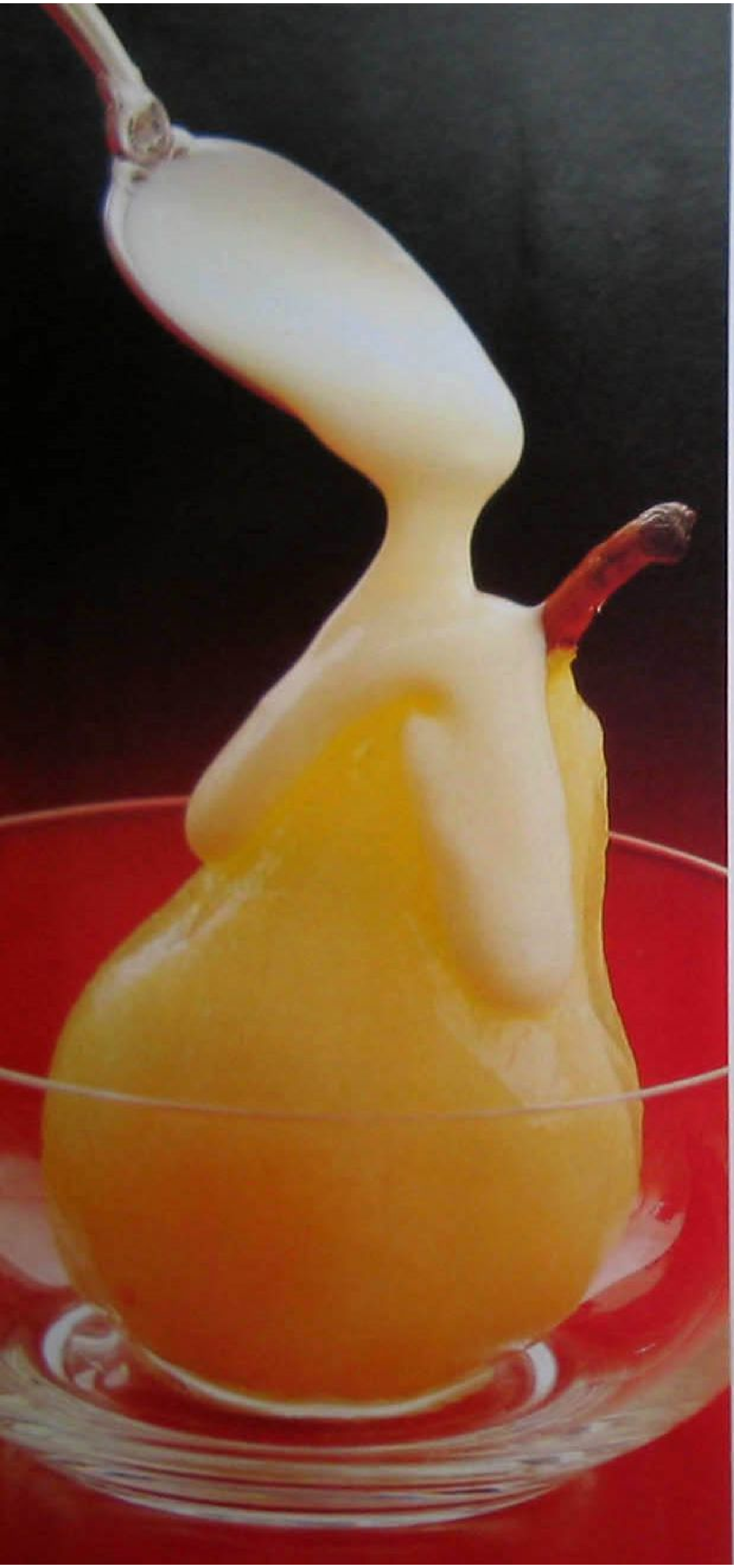
* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use powdered pectin according to manufacturer's instructions.



Pears with lemon custard

12½ mins

Standing time: none

Lemon flavoured pears make a light, refreshing dessert — the creamy custard makes them especially luscious.

100ml / 4fl oz water
225g / 8oz sugar
1 small lemon, thinly sliced
6 Williams or Packham pears, peeled, cored, stalks retained

LEMON CUSTARD
50g / 2oz sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp grated lemon zest
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
250ml / 8fl oz single cream
2 egg yolks, lightly beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

SERVES 6

1 Mix together water, sugar and lemon slices in a large, deep heatproof bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the syrup boils.
2 Stand the pears upright in the lemon syrup, arranging five pears around the edge of the bowl and one in the centre. Baste liberally with the lemon syrup.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes, or until the pears are tender, turning the dish once. Leave until cold, then chill for 2-3 hours, basting occasionally with the syrup.
4 To make the custard, place the sugar, lemon zest and cornflour in a bowl. Gradually add the cream, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes, or until the mixture boils and thickens, stirring every 30 seconds.
5 Stir a little of the thickened cream into the egg yolks then stir into the rest of the cream, blending well. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 1-1½ minutes, until hot and thickened. Stir every 30 seconds.
6 Stir in the vanilla flavouring, cover and leave until cold, then chill for 2-3 hours.
7 Serve the pears accompanied with the chilled custard.

Pears with Lemon custard

Pear and sweet mincemeat flan

11½ mins

Standing time: none

411g / 14½oz jar sweet mincemeat
3 pears, peeled, cored and chopped
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
75g / 3oz shortcrust pastry, thawed if frozen

SERVES 6

1 Mix together the mincemeat and chopped pears and spoon into the cooked pastry case.

2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes, or until the pears are tender and the filling is hot and bubbly in the centre of the flan. Give the flan a quarter turn every 3 minutes.

3 Meanwhile, thinly roll out the pastry and cut and prepare lattice strips (see Cook's notes).

4 Microwave the lattice on absorbent paper at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, giving the lattice a quarter turn every minute. Allow to cool. Using two fish slices, transfer the lattice to the flan.

Cook's notes

To make a lattice, cut 12 pastry strips, each about 12mm / ½in wide; arrange in a lattice pattern on a double thickness of absorbent paper on the turntable or a flat round plate. Place a 23cm / 9in plate or pie dish over lattice and trim around the edge to neaten. Remove plate and brush lattice with beaten egg if wished.

Orange-glazed pears

4 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This dessert is ideal for the calorie-conscious if you limit yourself to half a pear at 40 Cal / 170kJ each.

2 Williams or Packham pears, halved and cored
45ml / 3tbls orange juice
15ml / 1tbls raisins
grated zest of 1 orange
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls water
pinch of ground allspice
pinch of ground cinnamon

SERVES 2-4

1 Arrange the pears, cut side up, in a baking dish with the narrow pointed ends to the centre of the dish.

2 Place the orange juice, raisins, orange zest, cornflour, water, allspice and cinnamon in a small jug, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until thickened, stirring twice.

3 Pour over the pears. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes or until tender, rearranging and basting once. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

4 Transfer the pears to individual serving dishes, then pour a little syrup over each.

Fish cakes

Home-made fish cakes are both nutritious and delicious and, with a microwave and freezer, can be assembled speedily, stored, then thawed out and ready to eat in less than 20 minutes.

Fish cakes are twice as nice when made at home and the microwave speeds up their preparation. It is extremely convenient to make fish cakes in advance and store them in the freezer until needed — then they can be thawed and reheated in next to no time.

The fish cake mixture

Cooked or canned fish is suitable for fish cakes. Salmon, tuna or crabmeat make a tasty change from the more usual haddock or cod, or try smoked fish for a richer flavour. Make the mixture using at least equal quantities of fish to starchy ingredients — potatoes, rice or breadcrumbs. You can use a higher proportion of fish if you wish, but never use less and keep the mixture fairly dry or it will be difficult to shape neatly and not quite so nice to eat.

Shaping

Divide the prepared mixture evenly so the shaped cakes look attractive and cook evenly. Lightly flour your hands before shaping, and use a large metal spoon to scoop out even portions of the mixture.

To keep the fish cakes the best possible shape, mould them with floured hands, then smooth them over with a couple of palette knives or large, round-bladed knives.

Coating

Coating the cakes with flour is important as it gives them a dry surface to which the egg and crumbs can stick; the coating will slide straight off if the surface is wet.

To improve the appearance of microwaved fish cakes use golden breadcrumbs or try crushed potato crisps, wholemeal breadcrumbs or finely-chopped toasted nuts. A browning dish or microwave griddle can be used to cook the cakes, but if they are dipped in a colourful coating, this is not necessary.

Freezing

Once coated, either cook or freeze the cakes quickly. If left standing, the coating will become soggy.

To freeze, lay the coated fish cakes in a single layer on a baking tray lined with freezer paper or cling film. Open freeze the cakes until very hard, then wrap or pack in a polythene bag interleaving them with freezer tissue. For best results heat the fish cakes quickly from frozen — leaving them to thaw first gives a wet, soggy coating. Frozen fish cakes store well for up to one month.

Fun Fish Cakes

Fun fish cakes

13 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 10 mins

350g / 12oz smoked haddock fillet, skinned
350g / 12oz potatoes, peeled and cut into small pieces
45ml / 3tbls water
60ml / 4tbls milk
1 egg yolk
pepper
50g / 2oz plain flour
1 egg, beaten
75g / 3oz browned breadcrumbs
25g / 1oz margarine or butter
SERVES 4

1 Cut the smoked haddock into several pieces and lay on a plate with the thickest parts of the fish to the outside. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until the fish flakes easily. Drain then remove any bones and flake the fish into a bowl.

2 Place the potatoes and water in a bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, until the potatoes are tender, stirring once. Mash with milk. Add the fish with the egg yolk and pepper. Mash until smooth; divide into four.

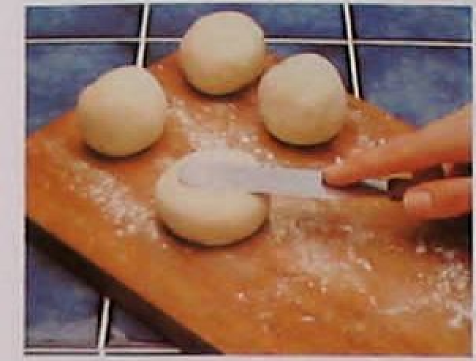
3 With floured hands, shape the mixture into flat, pear shapes as directed in step 2, below, shaping the thin end into a tail.

4 Coat the surface of each cake in the flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs and open freeze as directed in step 4, below. Wrap, label and freeze.

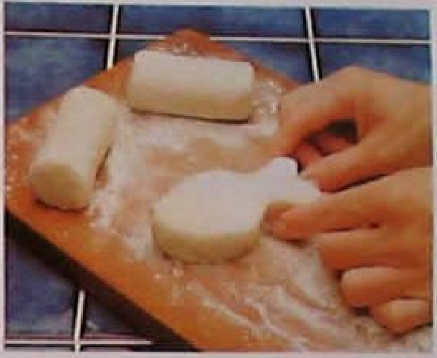
TO SERVE

Unwrap and lay the cakes on a baking dish. Thaw as directed in step 5, below. Place the margarine or butter in a small bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Drizzle over the cakes. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes or until heated through, rotating once. Alternatively, preheat a browning dish according to manufacturer's instructions and cook the thawed cakes at 100% (High) 2½ minutes each side.

How to shape and crumb fish cakes



Dust *hands with flour before shaping. For round cakes, divide the mixture into the required number of portions and roll each into a ball. For flat cakes, flatten these balls to a 2.5cm / 1in thickness.*



For fish shapes, *mould each portion into a flat pear shape, about 2.5cm / 1in thick, shaping the thin end into a 'V' shape for the tail. For croquettes roll each portion into a sausage shape, flattening the ends.*

To coat *6-8 medium cakes, place 50g / 2oz plain flour on a plate and spread 50g / 2oz dried or fresh breadcrumbs on another plate. Beat egg. Coat the cakes with flour, brush with egg, then roll in the crumbs.*

To freeze, thaw and heat fish cakes

Open freeze *in a single layer on a plate or baking sheet lined with freezer paper for 3-4 hours until firm. Wrap the cakes or place in a freezer bag and freeze for up to 1 month.*

To thaw, *remove the cakes from the freezer and unwrap and place in a single layer on a baking dish. Microwave, covered, at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes, rearranging once.*

To heat, *brush with melted butter, if using, and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until heated through; turn once. Leave to stand for 1-2 minutes before serving.*

RAY DUNS

Almond-coated fish balls

9 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

Thawing and reheating: 16 mins

1 onion, finely chopped
½ green pepper, finely chopped
225g / 8oz cod fillet, skinned
225g / 8oz smoked haddock fillet, skinned
75g / 3oz fresh white breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp paprika
5ml / 1tsp snipped fresh chives
2 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
100g / 4oz blanched almonds, chopped and lightly toasted

SAUCE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
300ml / 10fl oz can tomato juice
175ml / 6fl oz chicken stock
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 bay leaf
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion and pepper in a bowl. Cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes; stir once.
2 Cut the cod and haddock into pieces and lay on a plate. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes until the flesh is opaque. Flake, discarding bones.
3 Add the onion and pepper mixture. Stir in the breadcrumbs, seasonings, chives and eggs. Stir in the flour.
4 Shape the mixture into 24 balls, about 2.5cm / 1in diameter. Roll in the almonds. Freeze as directed in step 4, page 731.

TO SERVE
Mix all the sauce ingredients together in a bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes until thickened; stir after 2 minutes, then every 30 seconds. Remove the bay leaf.

Thaw and heat fish balls as directed in steps 5 and 6, page 731, rearranging the balls several times. Let stand for 1-2 minutes, while reheating the sauce at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.

ALAN DUNS

Almond-coated Fish balls

Kipper cakes with dill sauce

15 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

Thawing and reheating: 10 mins

175g / 6oz kippers
225ml / 8fl oz boiling water
75g / 3oz long-grain rice
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Cheshire or mild Cheddar cheese, grated
2.5ml / ½tsp Tabasco sauce
1 egg, separated
50g / 2oz dried breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls plain flour

SAUCE
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
10ml / 2tsp chopped dill, or 5ml / 1tsp dillweed
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Skin the kippers and flake into a bowl.
2 Place the water, rice and pinch of salt in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 12 minutes, stirring twice during cooking time.
3 Add the rice to the fish together with the cheese, Tabasco, egg yolk and pepper. Divide into eight and shape into flat cakes.
4 Lightly whisk the egg white in a dish. Spread out the crumbs on one plate and flour on another. Dip the cakes in flour, brush with egg white, then press on the crumbs to coat.
5 Open freeze as directed in step, 4, page 731.

TO SERVE
Combine the sauce ingredients in a small bowl, reserving a little dill for garnish. Transfer to a serving dish, cover and chill until ready to serve.

Unwrap the fish cakes and place on a baking dish in a single layer. To thaw and heat, microwave as directed in steps 5 and 6, page 731. Let stand 1-2 minutes. Spoon a little of the sauce over the cakes, if liked, and garnish with a sprinkling of the reserved dill. Serve the kipper cakes with the remaining sauce handed separately.

Individual salmon patties

Standing time: 3-4 mins

Thawing and reheating: 11¾ mins

440g / 15½oz can red salmon, drained and flaked, any bones removed
2 eggs
4 plain crackers, crushed
45ml / 3tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp snipped chives
2.5ml / ½tsp grated lemon zest
salt and pepper

SAUCE
15g / ½oz margarine or butter
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
175ml / 6fl oz water
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
pinch of sugar
pinch of dried basil
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Mix the salmon, eggs, cracker crumbs, milk, chives, lemon zest, salt and pepper together in a bowl. With lightly floured hands, divide the mixture into quarters and shape each one into a round fish patty.
2 Place on a baking tray and open freeze as directed in step 4, page 731. Wrap, label and freeze.

TO SERVE
Unwrap and place the patties on a flat plate. Thaw and microwave as directed in steps 5 and 6, page 731, or until set and no longer moist in the centre, rotating three or four times. Cover and leave to stand for 3-4 minutes, while preparing the sauce.

Place the butter in a small bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted. Stir in the cornflour and blend in the remaining sauce ingredients. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes until thick, stirring every 30 seconds, until the sauce is smooth. Spoon over the patties, garnish with parsley and serve.

Tuna spinach croquettes

6 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

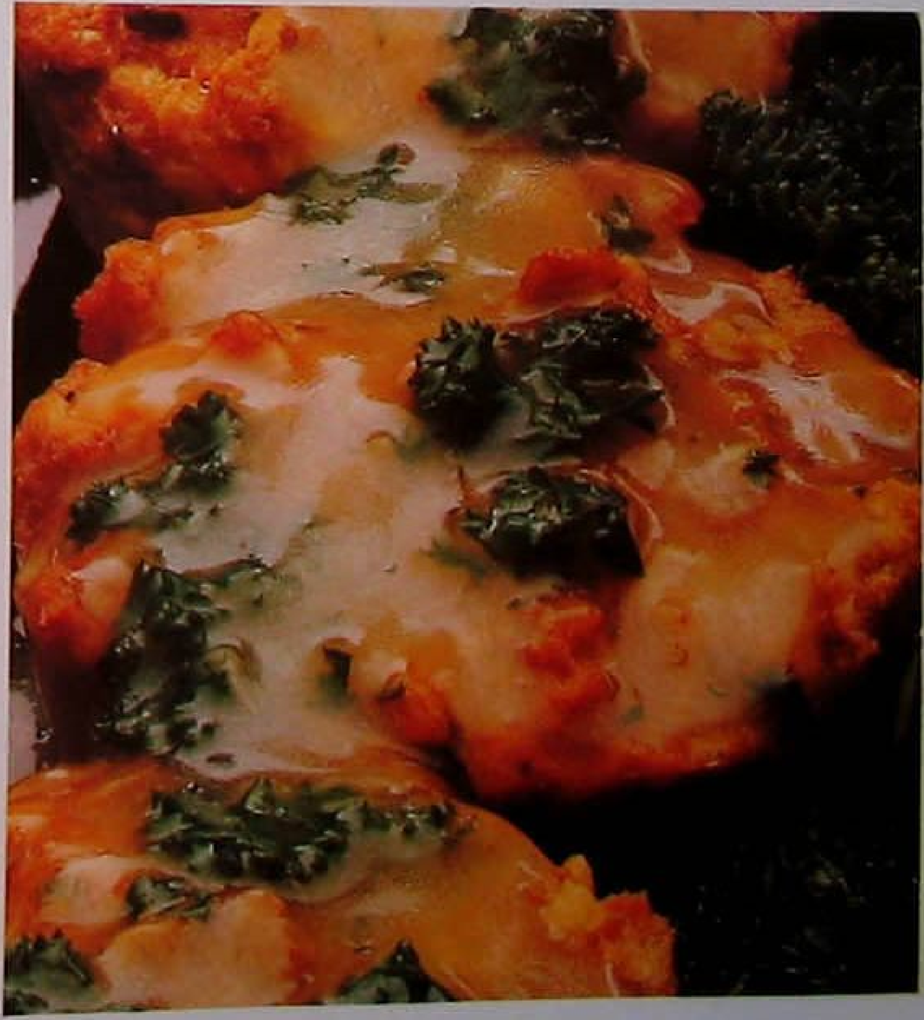
Thawing and reheating: 10 mins

200g / 7oz can tuna in oil, drained
225g / 8oz spinach
50g / 2oz margarine
50g / 2oz plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
pinch of cayenne
salt
50g / 2oz wholemeal breadcrumbs, made from day-old bread
1 egg

SERVES 4

1 Flake the tuna into a bowl and reserve. Wash the spinach, shake out the excess water and chop. Place in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring once.
2 Place the margarine in a bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Stir in 30ml / 2tbls flour and the milk. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for about 1½ minutes, until thick, whisking three times.
3 Drain the spinach thoroughly to extract as much water as possible. Add to the sauce with the tuna, lemon juice, cayenne and salt to taste. Mix well, then spread out on a plate and refrigerate for at least 2 hours to firm.
4 Divide into eight portions. Spread the remaining flour out on one plate and breadcrumbs on another. Beat the egg in a shallow dish. Shape each portion of the tuna mixture into a croquette and coat in the flour, egg and crumbs as directed in steps 2 and 3, page 731.
5 Open freeze as directed in step 4, page 731.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the croquettes and lay in a baking dish in a single layer. To thaw and heat, microwave as in steps 5 and 6, page 731.



Individual Salmon Patties

STAR RECIPE

Rack of lamb

A rack of lamb seasoned with garlic and herbs and cooked the microwave way gives succulent results in under 25 minutes. Served with a selection of vegetables, it makes the perfect Sunday lunch or dinner party dish.

A rack of lamb joint consists of seven joined cutlets from one side of the neck. Ask your butcher to chine the joint for you, so that it can be carved easily. The outside surface of the joint is covered with a skin which is best removed for this dish, so that the herbs stick to the fatty surface of the meat during cooking.

The joint is divided in two, with three ribs on one piece and four on the other, and tied together in a guard-of-honour style before cooking.

Remember to remove the string from the rack of lamb before serving and if liked, place a cutlet frill on each rib bone end for a special-occasion garnish. Serve the lamb hot with redcurrant jelly, a selection of fresh vegetables and gravy, (see Microtips, below).

Microtips

For rare meat, cook the joint at 100% (High) for 12 minutes; for well-done, at 100% (High) for 14½-15 minutes. To make gravy: pour cooked lamb juices into a measuring jug. Skim off fat and make up juices to 225ml / 8fl oz with water. Blend 7.5ml / 1½tsp cornflour into liquid; add ¼-½ crumbled chicken stock cube. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, whisking twice.

Cook's notes

The trimmings from the rib bones can be cooked and served as a tasty appetizer with drinks. Sprinkle the trimmings with pepper to taste and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, turning once. Leave to stand for 3-4 minutes. Add salt to taste and serve hot or cold.

Seasoned rack of lamb

13½ mins

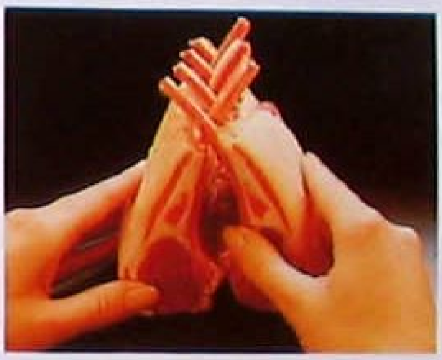
Standing time: 10 mins

The timings given above are for a medium-cooked joint. However, the lamb can be cooked rare (still pink) or well-done, if preferred — (see timings in Microtips below).

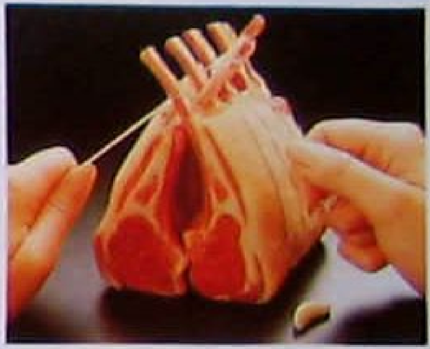
1 rack of lamb joint with 7 cutlets, weighing about 1.1kg / 2-2½lb, skinned and cut into a 3-rib and 4-rib piece
2 garlic cloves, halved
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried rosemary
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
salt and pepper

SERVES 3-4

How to microwave Seasoned rack of lamb



Cut *away the top 4cm / 1½in portion of fat and meat from each rib bone and reserve (see Cook's notes below), then scrape the bones clean. Stand the two pieces of lamb together with the rib bones facing inwards and the top ends interlocking.*



Tie *the two pieces together securely with string: take the string around each rib bone and under the base of chops each time so the meat keeps a good shape during cooking. Thoroughly rub the surface of joint with a half clove of garlic.*

Cut *three slits, about 6mm / ¼in deep and evenly spaced apart, in the surface of each side of the joint. Cut the remaining garlic into six thin slivers and push firmly into the slits. Mix the dried herbs and seasoning together and press on to the lamb joint.*

Place *joint on a roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) for 13½-14 minutes (or until cooked to taste, see Microtips left), turning every 2 minutes. Cover with a tent of foil (shiny side out). Let stand for 10 minutes. Remove string before carving.*

Stews and casseroles

Use your microwave to cook these meaty, one-pot stews. It's a no-fuss, energy-saving way of satisfying the family with nourishing meals that are full of flavour and goodness.

There's something very comforting about a substantial stew or casserole. Tender chunks of meat and colourful vegetables steaming in a rich gravy are real family fare and hard to resist.

Stews and casseroles are easy to prepare, too. Simply put all the ingredients together into a casserole and let them simmer gently until cooked (see steps to Beef Stew, right). For a meatier taste and appearance, quickly sear the meat in a browning dish before adding other ingredients.

Meat stews and casseroles are simple with a microwave cooker. Apart from stirring the food once or twice to ensure even cooking, you can leave the food to simmer gently on an economical 50% (Medium) setting with no further attention.

A microwave will not improve poor quality or tough meat, however long you cook it. So choose a tender cut, such as good-quality braising steak. For best results, trim off all the gristle and almost all the fat. If using slightly tough meat, tenderize it before cooking. Do this by beating it all over with the back of a wooden spoon, or marinate the meat in a few tablespoons of cider or wine vinegar, or wine.

In the Beef with mushrooms (see page 739) you could marinate the steak in the red wine used in the recipe. Leave meat that is being marinated in refrigerator for several hours, or overnight if there is time. The longer it is left the better the results; pat dry before cooking if necessary. A little lemon juice rubbed over the surface of the meat before marinating helps tenderize further.

Spicy Chicken Stew

Spicy chicken stew

40 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Ask your butcher to joint the chicken for you or, using a heavy knife and a pair of kitchen scissors, cut off the drumsticks and wings, then cut the carcass in four. Discard fat and small pieces of bone. Rinse and dry the joints.

1.4kg / 3lb chicken, cut into eight pieces
1 onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
10ml / 2tsp ground ginger
275ml / ½pt dry cider
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or follow the manufacturer's instructions. Add the chicken pieces, putting them skin side down, or remove the skin if you prefer, and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes.

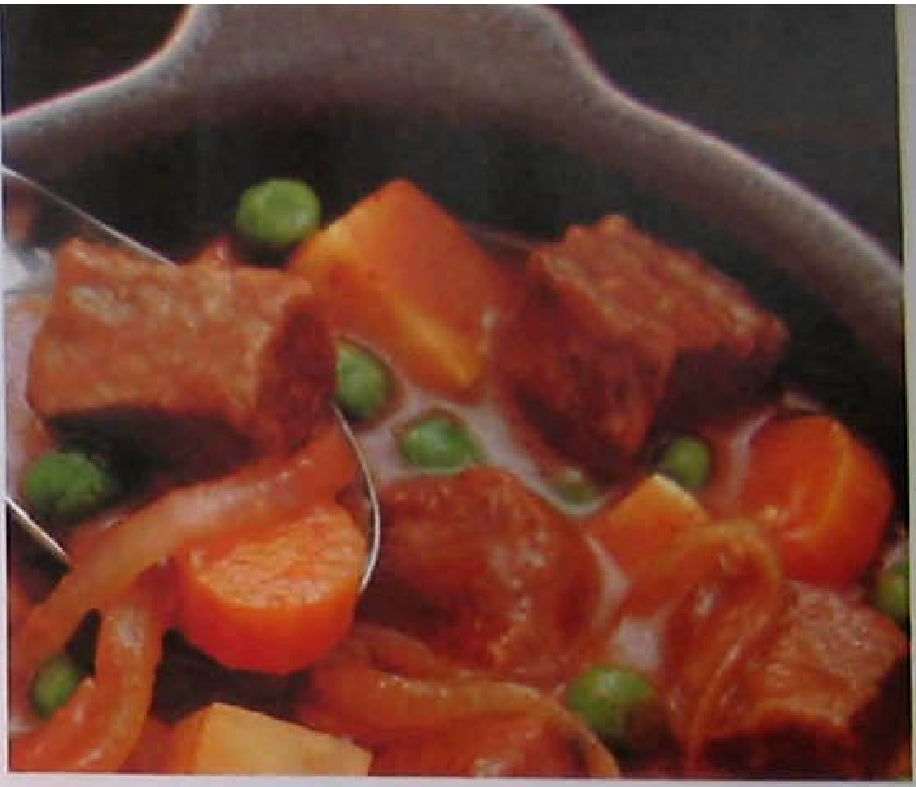
2 Add onion, celery, green pepper and crumbled stock cube. Turn the chicken pieces and make sure the vegetables are well distributed in the dish. Add the parsley.

3 Blend the cornflour and ginger to a smooth paste with a little of the cider. Stir in the remainder and pour into the dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 minutes, rearranging the chicken pieces and turning over once.

4 Leave the chicken, covered, to stand for 5 minutes. Check seasoning. Serve with plain cooked rice or buttered noodles.

Cook's notes

The way meat is cut up helps give a tender, well-cooked result. Cut across the grain into thin strips or small slices. Cubes of meat should be equal in size and neatly shaped.



Beef stew

60 mins

Standing time: 10-15 mins

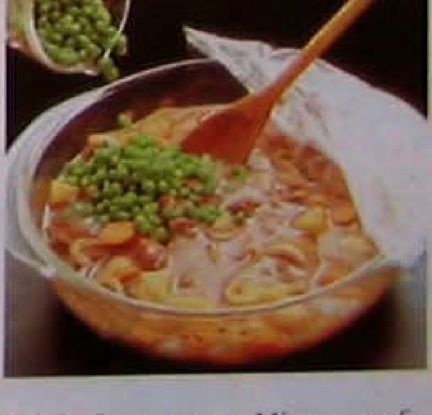
700g / 1½lb chuck steak, cubed
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
pepper
225g / 8oz potatoes, cubed
100g / 4oz carrots, sliced
2 onions, sliced
1 beef stock cube
425ml / 15fl oz pale ale
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée
1 clove garlic, crushed
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp Worcestershire sauce
225g / 8oz frozen peas

SERVES 4

How to microwave Beef stew

Toss meat, flour and pepper together in a large bowl until the meat is well coated. Add remaining ingredients, except the peas.

Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 50-60 minutes until meat is tender. Stir once.



Stir in frozen peas. Microwave for 10-15 minutes more. Leave to stand, covered, for 10-15 minutes.

RAY DUNS

Beef with Dumplings

Beef with dumplings

32 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb lean chuck steak, cut across the grain into small thin slices and trimmed
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
15ml / 3tsp ground mixed spice
pepper
2 celery stalks, thinly chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 beef stock cube
150ml / 5fl oz boiling water
425g / 15oz can tomatoes

DUMPLINGS
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
75g / 3oz margarine, diced
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
90ml / 6tbls milk

TOPPING
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Put the meat in a 3.4L / 6pt casserole dish. Sprinkle in the flour, mixed spice and pepper and mix with the meat to coat all the slices evenly.
2 Add the celery and onion, mixing well. Dissolve the stock cube in the water, then pour it into the casserole and stir in tomatoes.
3 Cover the casserole tightly and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 20-25 minutes, stirring once.
4 Meanwhile, prepare the dumplings: sift the flour into a bowl with a pinch of salt. Rub in the margarine. Stir in the parsley. Mix in the milk to make a soft, but not sticky dough; divide into eight.
5 Arrange the dumplings as far apart as possible on top of the meat. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Sprinkle the cheese over the dumplings and microwave for a further 3-4 minutes, or until the cheese has melted.

Lamb hot pot

60 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

700g / 1½lb lean boneless lamb, off the leg
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2 potatoes, cut into eight
3 carrots, thinly sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp sugar
1 lamb or beef stock cube
275ml / ½pt boiling water
225ml / 8oz frozen peas

SERVES 6

1 Remove all fat and gristle, then cut the meat into neat 2cm / ¾in cubes. Place in a 3.4L / 6pt casserole dish and sprinkle in the flour. Toss the meat until coated.
2 Add the prepared vegetables, garlic, bay leaf and sugar to the casserole and mix well. Dissolve stock cube in the water, then pour into casserole, stir and cover.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 25 minutes. Stir, re-cover and cook for a further 30-35 minutes, or until meat is tender. Add the peas for the last 10 minutes of the cooking time. Let stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Season and serve.

Lamb Hot Pot

Beef casserole

55 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

450g / 1lb lean chuck steak, cut across the grain into small, thin slices and trimmed
1 potato, cut into 12mm / ½in chunks
1 onion, cut into eight
3 celery stalks, sliced
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
pepper
1 beef stock cube
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
175ml / ⅓pt water
15ml / 1tbls wholegrain mustard

SERVES 4

1 Place the meat pieces in a 3.4L / 6pt casserole. Add the prepared vegetables, herbs and pepper. Mix all the ingredients together and crumble in the stock cube.

2 Blend the cornflour into a smooth paste with a little of the water, stir in the remainder and add the mustard. Pour over the meat mixture.

3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, then reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 45-60 minutes. Stir the stew once during cooking. Leave to stand, covered, for 5-10 minutes. Season to taste and serve with creamed potatoes and a green vegetable.

Beef with mushrooms

41 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The wine gives this stew a good rich flavour.

450g / 1lb frying steak, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes, trimmed
1 small onion, chopped
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt water
150ml / ¼pt red wine
salt and pepper

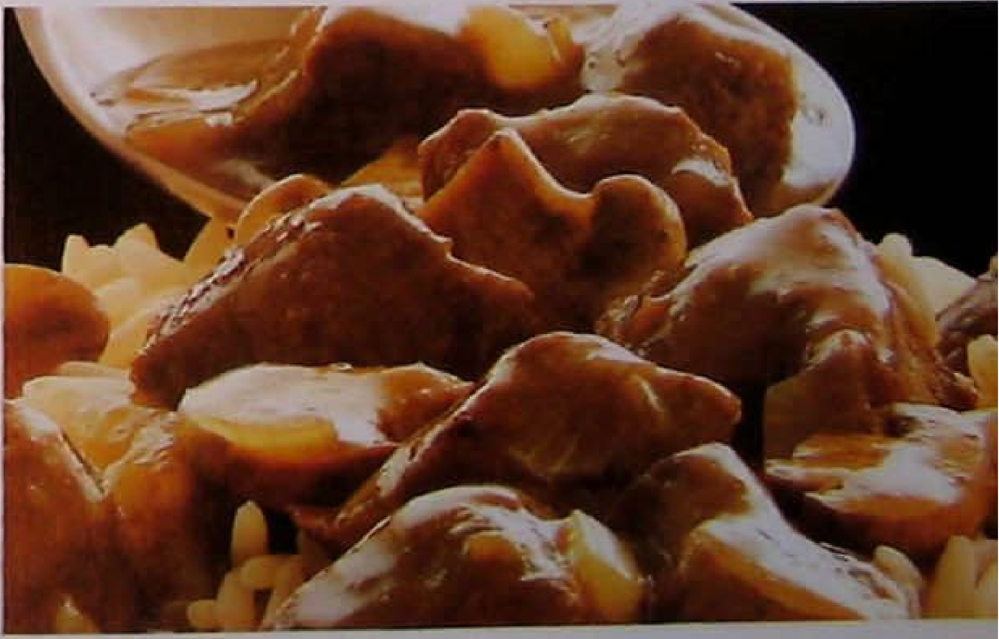
SERVES 4

How to microwave Beef with mushrooms

Heat *a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to maker's instructions. Add meat; cook 6 minutes, turning once.*

Add *onions, mushrooms and garlic. Mix well. Blend cornflour with water, stir in wine and add to meat. Cover with vented cling film.*

Reduce *power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 30-35 minutes, until meat is tender, stirring once. Stand covered for 5 minutes. Season to taste.*



Microwave plus toasters

Snacks are more substantial and left-overs more appetizing when served on a crisp toast base or in a toasted sandwich. Using the microwave in conjunction with a toaster means double-quick cooking times.

The sandwich was, originally, a convenient way of eating main course ingredients in an easy-to-handle form. Modern sandwich toasters have made sandwich-making much more sophisticated — and fun. Conventional toasters, too, are marvellously speedy and enable you to produce delicious, crunchy 'toastwiches' in the minimum of time.

Using the microwave in conjunction with these appliances extends your repertoire since it heats many foods without drying and can cook fillings or accompaniments extra quickly.

Rules for toasties

- Take care not to microwave bread for too long, or it will become tough and dry.
- When microwaving a piece of toast, make sure that it has a substantial filling on it, so that the moist ingredients absorb the microwave energy first.
- Add final layer of toast to the sandwiches after microwaving the filling. (If added before, it will become dry and unpleasantly tough.)

Microtips

To soften butter for spreading on toasted sandwiches or snacks, microwave 50g / 2oz unwrapped butter at 30% (Low) for 5 seconds. For 100g / 4oz, allow 10 seconds, turning once. Do not microwave for any longer, or the butter will start to soften too much; just a short burst of power is needed when softening butter for spreading.

Madeira with Melba sauce — a variation of Fruit loaf Dessert Toasties

Dessert toasties

2 mins

Sandwich toaster time: 2 mins

Standing time: none

4 slices of fruit loaf
25g / 1oz butter, softened
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp caster sugar
1 banana, peeled and sliced

CUSTARD
15ml / 1tbls custard powder
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
275ml / ½pt milk

SERVES 2

1 Heat the sandwich toaster according to the manufacturer's instructions.
2 Trim the edges of the fruit loaf to fit the toaster if necessary. Beat the butter with the cinnamon and sugar and spread over the loaf.
3 Place two slices of fruit loaf, buttered side down, on the sandwich toaster. Top each piece with slices of banana and cover with the remaining slices of fruit loaf, buttered side up. Toast for 2-3 minutes until crisp and golden, and the bananas are hot.
4 Meanwhile, blend the custard powder, sugar and a little of the milk to make a smooth paste. Gradually stir in the remaining milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until smooth and thick, stirring after 2 minutes, then every minute. Serve the toasties hot with custard as a quick dessert or a high tea snack.

VARIATION

Madeira toasties Use four slices of Madeira cake in place of the fruit loaf and spread with the same mixture of butter, cinnamon and sugar. Sandwich the slices together in the toaster with 30ml / 2tbls chocolate and hazelnut spread. Serve with a sauce made by microwaving 450g / 1lb soft fruit (such as blackcurrants, strawberries, raspberries or blackberries) at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until pulpy. Sieve the sauce if you prefer and serve hot with the toasted Madeira cake and chocolate spread sandwiches.

Toastwich snacks

3 mins

Standing time: none

8 slices of white or brown bread
225g / 8oz sliced canned meat (corned beef, luncheon meat, pork loaf)
2 tomatoes, sliced
50g / 2oz alfalfa or bean sprouts
50-75g / 2-3oz Red Leicester or Cheshire cheese, thinly sliced
40ml / 8tsp mayonnaise or soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Toast the bread conventionally in the toaster. Top four of the slices of toast with the sliced meat.
2 Divide the sliced tomato and bean or alfalfa sprouts between the four servings and top each one with slices of cheese.
3 Place the rounds of toast on a piece of absorbent paper, on a plate, and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until the cheese has melted.
4 Spread the mayonnaise or soured cream over the second four slices of toast and use them to sandwich the fillings. Serve immediately.

VARIATIONS

These sandwiches lend themselves to an almost infinite variety of combinations. Replace the canned meat with cold cooked turkey, chicken, ham or beef (or any other roast joint). Add other salad vegetables such as watercress, cucumber, onion slices, chopped spring onions, sliced radish or shredded red or green pepper.

Almost any sort of cheese is suitable — hard cheeses such as Edam, Gouda or Gruyère, or soft ones like Camembert, Dolcelatte or Brie.

To top the sandwich, use butter or margarine, French or English mustard, tomato ketchup, brown sauce, cranberry sauce, chutney or relishes to ring the changes.

Toastwich with turkey, salami, alfalfa, tomato, onion, cucumber and cheese

Toastwich snack for one: toast two slices of bread and use a quarter of the ingredients. Microwave the toast and filling at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds to melt the cheese. Top with the second piece of toast and serve.

Toastwich snack for two: Halve all the ingredients used above and microwave the filled toastwich at 100% (High) for 1½-1¾ minutes. Add the second layers of toast and serve immediately.

Microtips

To defrost an 800g / 1¾lb medium sliced or uncut loaf, loosen, but do not remove, the wrapper. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes until loaf no longer feels frosty, but is not warm. Leave to stand for 5 minutes then remove the wrapper. Either cut slices as required, or separate out the slices. The bread will be defrosted but the inside will be cold, so leave the bread for 5-10 minutes at room temperature and this will make it nicer to eat.

To defrost individual slices, wrap loosely in absorbent paper and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10-15 seconds. Be careful not to microwave whole loaves or individual slices for too long, as this will make the bread dry-out and stale very quickly.

Toasted turkey sandwich

55 secs

Standing time: none

2 slices bread
butter for spreading (optional)
5ml / 1tsp cranberry jelly
75g / 3oz cooked turkey, thinly sliced
15-30ml / 1-2tbls turkey gravy

SERVES 1

1 Toast the bread conventionally and butter if liked. Spread the cranberry jelly over one slice.

2 Arrange the slices of turkey over the cranberry jelly and spoon the gravy on the top.

3 Place the turkey topped toast on a piece of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, until the meat is hot.

4 Top with the second piece of toast, buttered side down, and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 10 seconds.

VARIATION

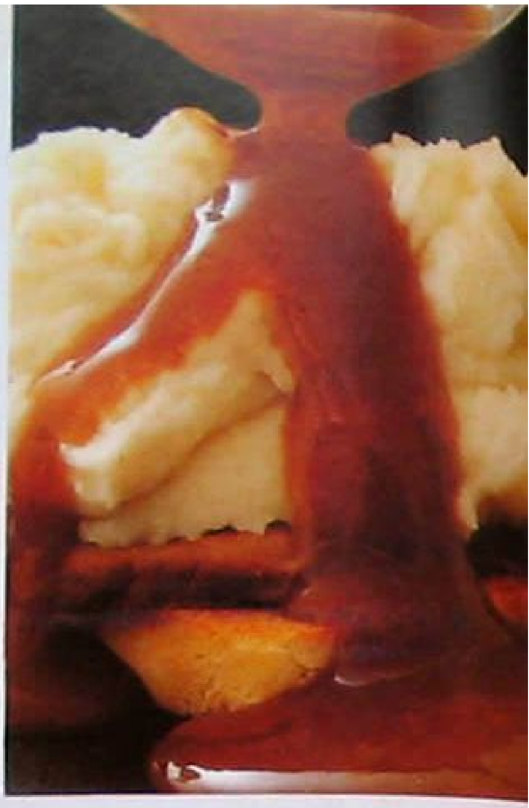
Use cooked chicken and its gravy or a little left-over stuffing in place of some of the meat.

Toasted Turkey Sandwich

Beef 'n' potato toasties

4¾ mins

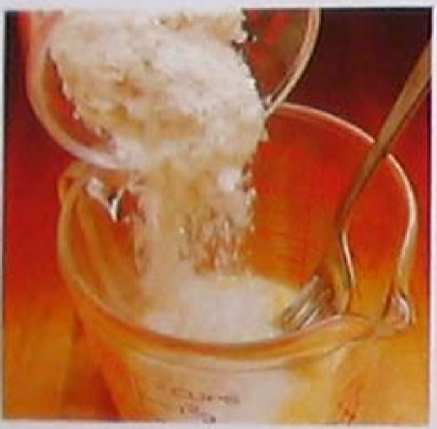
Standing time: none



200ml / 7fl oz water
75ml / 5tbls milk
68g / 2½oz packet instant mashed potato
knob of butter
15ml / 1tbls soured cream or yoghurt
2 slices of bread
25g / 1oz butter, softened
little horseradish sauce or made mustard
2 slices cold roast beef, about 6mm / ¼in thick
150ml / ¼pt beef gravy

SERVES 2

How to microwave Beef 'n' potato toasties



Combine *the water and milk in a bowl or jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes or until boiling. Add the potato and stir well. Add a knob of butter and about 15ml / 1tbls soured cream or yoghurt. Beat well until fluffy. Toast the bread conventionally.*

Mix *the butter with the horseradish or mustard and spread over the slices of toast. Arrange the toast on a serving dish and top each with a slice of beef and a mound of mashed potato. Spoon the gravy over the potato. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1¼-1¾ minutes until hot.*

Chilli burgers

18 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, finely chopped
300g / 10.6oz can tomato soup
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
pinch of mustard powder
pinch of cayenne pepper
salt and pepper
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
425g / 15oz red kidney beans, drained
4 hamburger buns

SERVES 4

1 Mix the beef, celery, onion and green pepper together in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the meat is no longer pink stirring after 3 minutes and breaking up the meat.

2 If a lot of fat has run out of the meat, drain it off. Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the buns. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 5 minutes, until hot through. Stir well.

3 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave, covered, for 8-10 minutes, so that the mixture becomes thick. Stir well.

4 Meanwhile, split the buns and toast on both sides. Spoon a quarter of the chilli meat mixture on to the bottom half of each toasted bun, then sandwich together with the tops of the buns. Serve.

Apple toast topper

4 mins

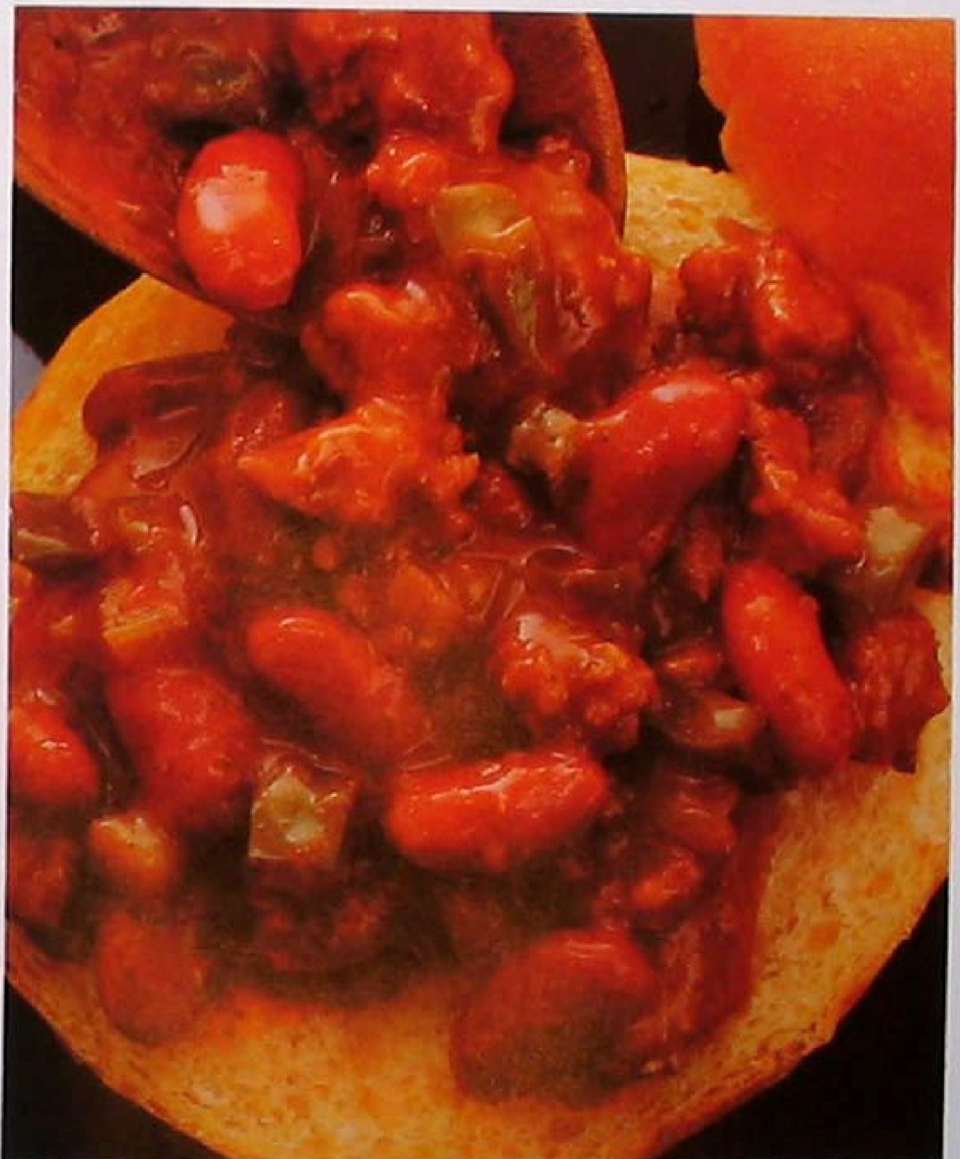
Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb firm dessert apples, unpeeled, cored and diced
60ml / 4tbls demerara sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
hot buttered toast, to serve

SERVES 6-8

1 Mix all the ingredients except the toast together in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the apples are just tender when pierced with a knife. Stir once or twice.

Left: *Chilli Burger*
Right: *Apple Toast Topper*



Dessert cakes

A standard 'all-in-one' cake mixture is an ideal base for many different pudding ideas. Sandwiched, iced, frosted, fruited or glazed, these simple mixes make the most tempting, delicious desserts.

Mixing and microwaving are basic principles for all the recipes featured here. 'All-in-one' mixing is quick and, with the addition of baking powder (not generally needed in creamed cake mixtures) to give the additional lift to make up for air lost in heating, it is easy to combine all the main ingredients in one to two minutes. Then add the extra touches which make these cake desserts special.

For easier mixing, soften the butter or margarine by microwaving at 30% (Low) for 1-1½ minutes for every 100g / 4oz. This gives better results than tub-type soft margarines. (Times for softening butter or margarine are given in the Microtips, page 746).

Some recipes use a fruit base for an upside-down pudding. While the sponge would normally be cooked at 100% (High), the water and sugar in the fruit makes 50% (Medium) more suitable. This avoids the fruit losing its shape.

Particularly moist cake mixtures which have fruit in the recipe can be sprinkled with a layer of biscuit crumbs before the standing time. This absorbs excess liquid.

Converting cake dish sizes

Certain sizes of square dish are hard to find in material which is suited to microwaving. Use the chart opposite to help you choose a suitable substitute. Remember that the chart is a guide only, and you may need to adjust timings according to your own microwave.

Apricot Glazed Fruit Ring

Apricot glazed fruit ring

7¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75g / 3oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
150g / 5oz sugar
6.5ml / 1¼tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
65g / 2½oz butter or margarine, softened
2 eggs
60ml / 4tbls milk
grated zest of 1 orange

TO SERVE
100g / 4oz apricot jam
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
fresh fruit tossed in lemon juice
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream

SERVES 9-10

1 Grease a 1.4L / 2½pt ring mould, or a 1.7L / 3pt straight-sided dish. Coat the base and sides with three-quarters of the biscuit crumbs. (If using the large, straight-sided dish, use only half; grease the sides of a 575ml / 1pt heatproof tumbler and use a quarter of the crumbs to coat the outside, then stand in the centre of the prepared dish to improvize a ring mould.)

2 Place the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, vanilla, butter or margarine, eggs, milk and orange zest, in a bowl and beat until smooth. Either use an electric whisk for 1 minute, or beat by hand for 2 minutes. Spoon the mixture into the prepared dish.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn after 3 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-3 minutes, checking every 30 seconds to see if it is cooked. The cake is done when the top springs back when pressed.

4 Sprinkle the top with the remaining crumbs and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Loosen the edges of the cake with a palette knife and turn out on to a serving dish.

5 While the cake is standing, microwave the jam and lemon juice at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, until bubbling. Mix and spread over the cake. Leave until cold.

6 To serve, decorate with fruit and cream.

Converting cake dish sizes

Round	Square	Oblong
18cm / 7in	15cm / 6in	–
20cm / 8in	18cm / 7in	–
23cm / 9in	20cm / 8in	25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in
25cm / 10in	23cm / 9in	28 × 18cm / 11 × 7in

Brownie sundae pie

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz plain chocolate
90g / 3½oz plain flour, sifted
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, softened
100g / 4oz sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
1 egg
125ml / 4fl oz milk
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)
125ml / 4fl oz chocolate sauce (bought variety)
icing sugar to dust

SERVES 6

1 Place the chocolate in a large bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute to melt.

2 Add the flour, butter or margarine, sugar, bicarbonate of soda, vanilla, egg and milk. Beat until smooth and using an electric whisk for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes.

3 Spoon the mixture into the cooked pastry case and drizzle the chocolate sauce over the top.

4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 11-13 minutes, or until the cake is springy to touch, turning after 3, then every 2 minutes.

5 Remove dish from cooker, dust top with sifted icing sugar and leave to stand for 5 minutes.

6 Serve warm or cold with ice cream, extra chocolate sauce if liked, or leave until cold and ice with Chocolate frosting (above).

Chocolate frosting

3 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

25g / 1oz plain chocolate
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls milk
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

FOR A 23cm / 9in CAKE

1 Place the chocolate, butter and milk in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes until the chocolate has melted, stirring once. Add the icing sugar and vanilla, beating well. Leave to stand for 8 minutes, then beat until glossy.

2 Cool and use to frost or sandwich cakes together.

Brownie Sundae Pie

Chocolate mallow cake

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz plain chocolate
85g / 3½oz plain flour, sifted
150g / 5oz sugar
4ml / ¾tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
50g / 2oz butter, softened
2 eggs
30ml / 2tbls water
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream
12 marshmallows, cut in half
1 quantity Chocolate Frosting (see page 745)

SERVES 10-12

1 Place the chocolate in a large bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute to melt.

2 Add all the other ingredients except the marshmallows and frosting and beat until smooth. Use an electric mixer for 1 minute, or beat by hand for 2 minutes.

3 Turn the mixture into a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish and spread evenly. Stand the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn after 3 minutes.

4 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 2-5 minutes until well risen, springy and just cooked. Remove from the cooker and stand for 5 minutes.

5 Place marshmallow halves, cut side down, at regular intervals over the top of the cake. Leave to cool completely.

6 Prepare the chocolate frosting according to the recipe and use to coat the top of the cooled cake.

7 Cut between the marshmallows to serve.

VARIATION

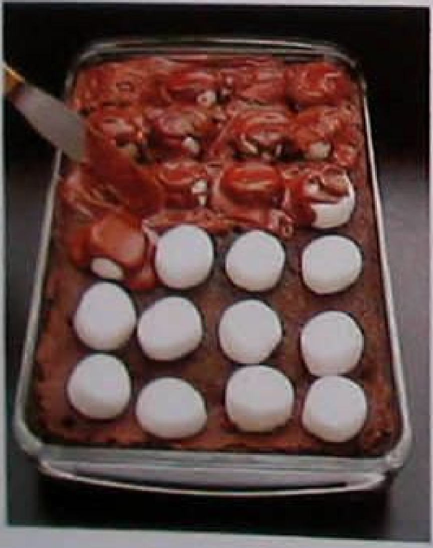
Make a plain cake base, flavour it with orange or lemon zest and cover the marshmallows with a lemon or orange frosting (see page 97).

Microtips

To make butter or margarine easier to beat into cake mixtures, unwrap and microwave gently. For 100g / 4oz butter, microwave at 30% (Low) for 10 seconds, turning once. Allow 10-15 seconds for 175g / 6oz butter.

Do not over-microwave, or the butter will melt and be too liquid to use.

How to frost Chocolate mallow cake



Place *the marshmallows, cut side down and close together, on the cake after about 3 minutes standing time. Leave the cake to cool, then cover with the Chocolate frosting.*

Cut *the cake into squares, slicing between the marshmallows. If there is time, leave the cake to stand for several hours after frosting: this makes the cake easier to slice.*

Topsy-turvy pineapple cake

16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

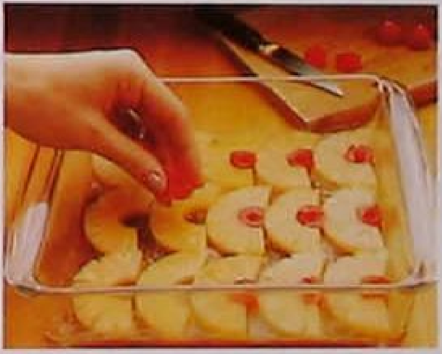
50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz demerara sugar
822g / 1lb 13oz can pineapple rings in juice, drained
15 glacé or maraschino cherries

CAKE MIXTURE
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
150g / 5oz sugar
6.5ml / 1¼tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
65g / 2½oz butter, softened
2 eggs
60ml / 4tbls milk
grated zest of 1 orange
40g / 1½oz plain, sweet biscuits

SERVES 8-9

How to microwave Topsy-turvy pineapple cake

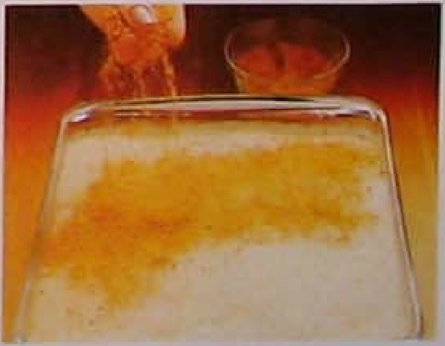
Microwave *the butter, covered, in a 23cm / 9in square baking dish for 1-1½ minutes until hot and bubbling. Sprinkle the demerara sugar evenly over the top.*



Arrange *pineapple, cut in halves, on the sugar mixture; trim to fit if necessary. Place a half cherry in centre of each slice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.*

Place *the flour, sugar, baking powder, vanilla, butter or margarine, eggs, milk and orange zest in a bowl. Beat until smooth for 1-2 minutes, then spread evenly over the pineapple.*

Stand *on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn after 3 minutes. Raise to 100% (High) and microwave for 5-8 minutes.*



Test *for doneness — the cake is cooked if it springs back when pressed lightly. Crush the biscuits and spinkle evenly over the top of the cake, then leave to stand for 5 minutes.*

Loosen *the edges of the cake with a palette knife, then turn out on to a serving dish. Serve the cake warm on its own, or with cream, ice cream or thick natural yoghurt.*

Upside-down apple cake

10
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz butter
60ml / 4tbls soft dark brown sugar
2 cooking apples, cored and thinly sliced

CAKE
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
150g / 5oz sugar
4ml / ¾tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of grated nutmeg
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
65g / 2½oz butter, softened
60ml / 4tbls buttermilk
2 eggs
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
40g / 1½oz plain sweet biscuits, crushed

SERVES 6-8

1 Line the base of a 23cm / 9in shallow round dish with greaseproof paper.
2 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds to melt. Add the brown sugar and mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds or until boiling. Beat until smooth, then spread evenly in the dish.
3 Arrange the apple slices, slightly overlapping, in base of dish.
4 Combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, bicarbonate of soda, salt, softened butter, buttermilk, eggs and vanilla in a bowl and beat together until smooth. This is best done by beating with an electric mixer for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes.
5 Spread the cake mixture evenly over the apple slices. Place the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a half turn after 3 minutes.
6 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 3-5½ minutes or until the cake is light and springy to the touch, turning the dish once. Sprinkle the crumbs over the top.
7 Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Invert on to a serving dish and serve hot or warm.

Speedy spaghetti

A dish of perfectly-cooked spaghetti topped with a delicious sauce makes a tasty and economical meal which is wonderfully quick to prepare using the microwave cooker.

Of all the different types of pasta available, spaghetti is surely the most popular and happily combines with meat, fish or vegetable sauces to make a delicious and substantial meal. Economical and tasty sauces made with a few store-cupboard ingredients, or more elaborate ones, are all quickly made in the microwave.

Spaghetti cooks successfully in the microwave (see instructions given in Microtips, page 750), or to speed up the cooking even further it can be cooked in the conventional way while the sauce or topping is being microwaved. Whichever method of cooking you choose, remember that spaghetti should be cooked until *al dente* — that is until just resistant to the bite but not hard at the core. Begin testing by biting or pinching a strand towards the end of the minimum recommended cooking time. Drain well and rinse if sticky (it may not need it) with hot, not boiling, water and drain well again. If liked, give the cooked spaghetti a glossy finish by heating 15ml / 1tbls olive oil or butter in the rinsed-out pan, then add the drained spaghetti and toss with two forks until evenly coated and glistening. Spaghetti prepared this way can be reheated in the microwave just before serving.

RAY DUNS

Spaghetti Bolognese

Microtips

To cook 225g / 8oz spaghetti in the microwave: place the spaghetti in a 25 × 20cm / 10 × 8in dish and pour over 700ml / 1¼pt boiling, salted water. Add a few drops of oil then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring once during cooking. Stand for 5 minutes, then drain and rinse thoroughly, if sticky, with hot (not boiling) water and drain well again before serving.

If you cook both the spaghetti and the sauce in the microwave, combine the two at the end of cooking and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, until thoroughly heated through.

Spaghetti bolognese

27
mins

Standing time: none

For speed it is easier, in this recipe, to cook the spaghetti conventionally while the sauce is being microwaved. If you wish to cook the spaghetti in the microwave, prepare the sauce while the spaghetti is standing, then pour the finished sauce over the drained spaghetti and reheat for 2-3 minutes at 100% (High).

Ring the changes with the spaghetti, see the variations given on page 751.

225g / 8oz spaghetti
grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

BOLOGNESE SAUCE
225g / 8oz minced beef
100g / 4oz chicken livers, chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
2 bacon rashers, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
50g / 2oz mushrooms, sliced
30ml/ 2tbls tomato purée or paste
125ml / 4fl oz red wine
225g / 8oz tomatoes, skinned and chopped
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
ground nutmeg, to taste
75ml / 3fl oz double cream

SERVES 4

How to microwave Spaghetti bolognese

Combine *the minced beef, chicken livers, carrot, bacon, celery, onion and garlic in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring twice.*

Add *the remaining sauce ingredients, except the cream, to the minced beef mixture. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring twice during the cooking time.*

Uncover *the casserole and stir well. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and continue cooking, covered, for 15 minutes, stirring twice. Meanwhile cook spaghetti conventionally.*

Stir *the cream into the beef mixture and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until heated through. Spoon the sauce over the drained spaghetti; serve with grated Parmesan cheese.*

RAY DUNS

Chicken pasta paprikash

16
mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz spaghetti, cooked conventionally
1 garlic clove, crushed
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1 carrot, chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
450 / 1lb boneless chicken, cubed
22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour
7.5ml / 1½tsp paprika
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
salt and pepper
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Put the garlic, mushrooms, celery, onion and carrot in a casserole with the butter. Cook, covered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.
2 Toss chicken cubes in flour and paprika and add to the casserole. Pour over the chicken stock and add seasoning to taste. Stir well.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes until tender, stirring twice.
4 Serve the chicken mixture over the spaghetti and top each portion with the soured cream.

Spaghetti with mushrooms

23 mins

Standing time: none

Spaghetti can form the basis for delicious vegetarian meals. Vegetables cooked with herbs and flavourings make this a delicious topping for spaghetti and can be on the table in a very short time.

225g / 8oz spaghetti, cooked conventionally

MUSHROOM SAUCE

450g / 1lb mushroom, sliced
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
30ml / 2tbls sunflower oil
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
60ml / 4tbls tomato purée or paste
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano

SERVES 4

1 Combine the mushrooms, celery, onion, green pepper, garlic and oil in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Above: *Chicken Pasta Paprikash*
Right: *Spaghetti with Mushrooms*

2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.

3 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium), uncover, and microwave for 15-18 minutes, or until the sauce is thickened, stirring once during cooking.

4 Stir the sauce well and pour over the spaghetti to serve.

Spaghetti with mushroom sauce for two: halve all the ingredients. For the sauce, cook the mushrooms, celery, onion, green pepper, garlic and oil in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, until thick.

VARIATIONS

Take advantage of the different types of spaghetti available. Look out for the packets of two or three-coloured spaghetti — the green and white look particularly pretty when combined with an interesting sauce. Wholewheat spaghetti is becoming increasingly popular. Fresh spaghetti is now widely available: see cooking instructions given in Microtips on page 752; it is very quick to cook.

Beefy spaghetti soup

19½ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 celery stalks, sliced
5ml / 1tsp oil
450ml / 16fl oz hot water
295g / 10.4oz can beef consommé
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
100g / 4oz frozen green beans
100g / 4oz spaghetti,
  broken into 5cm / 2in pieces
salt and pepper
1 bay leaf
300g / 10.6oz can tomato and
  mushroom spaghetti sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the beef, onion, garlic, celery and oil in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring once.

2 Drain off the fat from mixture, then add the remaining the ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 17-20 minutes, or until the spaghetti is *al dente*, stirring occasionally.

Saucy chicken spaghetti

11¼ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz spaghetti, cooked
  conventionally
50g / 2oz grated Parmesan cheese
60ml / 4tbls single cream
225g / 8oz frozen asparagus
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
225ml / 8fl oz chicken stock
75ml / 3fl oz white wine
350g / 12oz cooked chicken,
  cubed
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
paprika, for sprinkling

SERVES 4

1 Place the cooked spaghetti in a large serving dish and toss with the Parmesan cheese and cream. Set aside.

2 Microwave the frozen asparagus in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender, rearranging once. Drain and cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths.

3 Melt the butter in a covered 575ml / 1pt casserole at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the flour, seasoning and thyme.

Gradually blend in the stock and wine, then microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until thickened, stirring once.

4 Stir the chicken and asparagus into the sauce, pour the sauce over the spaghetti and toss together lightly. Sprinkle with the flaked almonds and paprika. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.

Cook's notes

To reduce the preparation time of this dish even further, use canned asparagus tips instead of the frozen type. Add to the sauce as instructed in step 4 and follow the method given in recipe.

Microtips

Fresh pasta is no longer confined to specialist shops and is becoming more widely available: it may be found on many supermarket shelves. It only takes 2-3 minutes to cook at 100% (High) in the microwave, so is yet another way of producing a quick dish even more speedily.

Spaghetti with red bean sauce

28½ mins

Standing time: none

This is a substantial family supper dish which is economical yet still full of protein, with the red kidney beans supplementing the meat in the sauce. To ring the changes, replace the red kidney beans with a can of drained cannellini or butter beans.

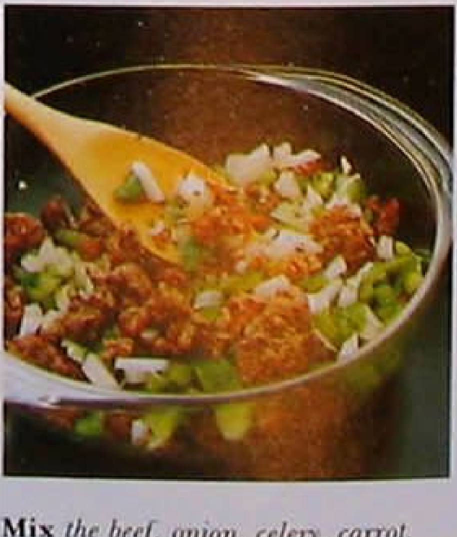
225g / 8oz spaghetti, cooked conventionally

BEAN SAUCE

225g / 8oz minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée or paste
175ml / 6fl oz red wine
7.5ml / 1½tsp fresh chopped basil or marjoram
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1 small bay leaf
425g / 15oz can red kidney beans, drained

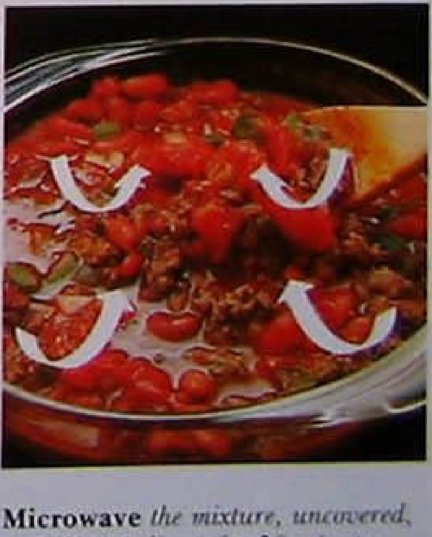
SERVES 4

How to microwave Spaghetti with red bean sauce



Mix *the beef, onion, celery, carrot, green pepper and garlic in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until vegetables have softened, stirring once.*

Add *remaining sauce ingredients to minced beef mixture, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring twice during cooking. Remove cover and stir well.*



Microwave *the mixture, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 20 minutes, stirring several times during cooking. Discard the bay leaf and serve over cooked spaghetti.*

Grain puddings

Rice and grain puddings have been popular for centuries. Bring them right up to date with the help of your microwave. Embellish them with a few extra ingredients for a special occasion dessert.

For inexpensive desserts with almost endless versatility, it's hard to beat a traditional grain and milk pudding.

Rice is the most commonly used pudding grain. Round or short-grain Carolina * rice is the most suitable. Generally white rice will produce a creamier result than brown, as the grains swell more and stick together. (Brown rice needs much longer cooking and produces a more grainy pudding.)

Flaked and ground rice make more closely textured puddings, suitable for serving hot or cold.

Semolina, which is made from durum wheat, and cornmeal both make thick, close-textured puddings suitable for moulding.

In spite of their 'school lunches' reputation, tapioca and sago both make delicious desserts.

Milk can be used in all kinds of blends — enrich pasteurized milk by replacing up to half the amount with thin cream (but never use all cream, as this will make a sticky pudding). Evaporated milk is used combined with milk and water in some of the recipes here as it gives a rich texture and has a slightly sweet flavour. Condensed milk needs no extra sugar when diluted, as it is already sweetened.

If using reconstituted skimmed milk, add 50g / 2oz butter to 575ml / 1pt milk for a richer texture. Sterilized and ultra heat-treated milk produce a creamy-textured pudding when used on their own. To give a refreshing fruity flavour, replace up to a

Italian Semolina Pudding

RAY DUNS

quarter of the total liquid with fruit juice. (Adjust the sugar if the fruit juice is sweetened.)

Unlike conventionally-cooked grain puddings, these microwaved desserts will not have a golden skin. The method of cooking also requires that the pudding be stirred regularly in most cases, so the mixture is evenly cooked. A similar pudding would have to be cooked for about 1¾ hours, and stirred frequently on a conventional cooker, while a microwaved version will take only 30-40 minutes. Also, there is no danger of the milk burning or sticking but make sure your bowl is large enough to avoid boiling over.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Calrose short grain rice.

Cook's notes

For a really creamy pudding, soak the rice for the pudding in the cooking liquid for 6 hours or overnight. This allows the grains to slowly absorb the liquid.

Microtips

To give extra flavour to a grain pudding, infuse a few strips of orange or lemon zest or a vanilla pod in the milk for 20 minutes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until almost boiling. Stand for 20 minutes, then proceed with the recipe.

Traditional rice pudding

36 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225ml / 8fl oz milk
170g / 6oz can evaporated milk
175ml / 6fl oz water
1.5-2ml / ¼-¾tsp ground cinnamon or mixed spice (optional)
75ml / 5tbls round-grain rice
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
grated nutmeg or jam to serve

SERVES 4

VARIATIONS

Chocolate rice pudding: omit the cinnamon or spice from the basic recipe and add 30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder, blended with a little of the milk. Microwave as before.

Brown rice pudding: omit the spice from the basic recipe and replace the round-grain rice with brown rice. This will take much longer to microwave, so allow 56 minutes in all, stirring frequently to separate the grains.

Fruited brown rice pudding: add 45ml / 3tbls chopped dried apricots and 30ml / 2tbls sultanas to the brown rice pudding halfway through the cooking time. Stir well to separate the grains and the pieces of fruit.

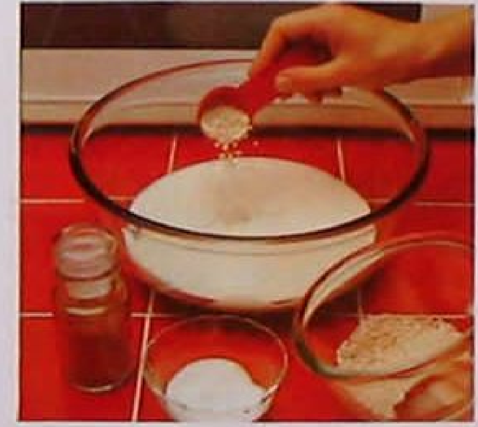
Nutty brown rice pudding: add 45ml / 3tbls chopped almonds, hazelnuts or mixed nuts to the pudding 20 minutes before the end of the cooking time. Stir well and microwave as before.

Microtips

As a general rule, you can use 50g / 2oz of any grain with 575ml / 1pt liquid, adding 30ml / 2tbls sugar. Cook as for the Traditional rice pudding, for about 36 minutes.

As they need stirring, microwaved grain puddings tend to lose some of their liquid by evaporation. This makes them thicker than a conventionally cooked pudding, so you may like to stir in a little extra milk or cream at the end of cooking time.

How to microwave Traditional rice pudding



Pour *the milk, evaporated milk and water into a 2.8L / 5pt bowl. Stir in the spice (if used), the rice and the sugar and mix thoroughly.*

Cover *the pudding and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the mixture is boiling, stirring after 2-3 minutes.*

Reduce *the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 30 minutes, or until the pudding is thick and creamy, stirring every 15 minutes.*

Leave *the cooked pudding to stand for 5 minutes before serving in individual dishes. If liked, serve sprinkled with nutmeg, or topped with jam.*

Italian semolina pudding

33½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz semolina
grated zest of ½ lemon
50g / 2oz flaked almonds
575ml / 1pt milk
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
2 eggs, separated
420g / 14.8oz can apricots, drained

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the butter in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Stir in the semolina, lemon zest and flaked almonds.

2 Pour 425ml / 15fl oz of the milk into a large jug; stir in sugar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, to boil.

3 Pour the hot milk over the semolina, stirring continuously. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes, stirring three times during cooking. Allow to cool.

4 Lightly beat the egg yolks with the remaining milk and stir into the pudding. Whisk the egg whites to soft peaks, then fold them into the semolina.

5 Arrange the apricots, round side down, over the base of a buttered 2.3L / 4pt round dish. Pour the semolina pudding over the apricots and cover. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20 minutes, or until the pudding is firm in the centre.

6 Turn the pudding out on to a warmed serving plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes before serving.

Flaked rice pudding

21 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

575g / 1pt full cream milk
75ml / 5tbls flaked rice
30ml / 2tbls sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
15g / ½oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Pour the milk into a 2.8L / 5pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, to boil.

2 Stir in the rice, sugar, nutmeg and butter. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15 minutes.

3 Leave the pudding to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Greek-style Pudding

RAY DUNS

VARIATIONS

Greek-style pudding: use 30ml / 2tbls honey in place of the sugar, and omit the nutmeg. Stir in the grated zest of half a lemon and 30ml / 2tbls sultanas with the rice. Microwave as above. Dust with ground cinnamon if liked.

Danish-style pudding: add 50g / 2oz blanched almonds and omit the nutmeg. Sprinkle the cooked pudding with 30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to melt.

Indian corn pudding

10 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

50g / 2oz margarine, softened
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
1 egg, beaten
75g / 3oz self-raising flour
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
45ml / 3tbls cornmeal
100ml / 3½fl oz milk
125ml / 4fl oz maple syrup

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix the margarine, caster sugar, egg, flour, baking powder and cornmeal. Stir in the milk.

2 Grease a 1.1L / 2pt pudding basin. Add 30ml / 2tbls of the maple syrup, then the pudding.

3 Cover loosely and microwave at 30% (Low) for 10 minutes. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

4 Turn out on to a warmed serving dish. Serve the maple syrup.

Microtips

Because of the sugar content of the syrup, this pudding needs to be cooked at a lower power than other grain puddings. This will prevent the syrup burning.

Cook's notes

Cornmeal is a pale yellow, starchy meal. It is sold in healthfood shops, some supermarkets and Italian delicatessens, where it is called polenta.

Peach condé

38 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 quantity Traditional rice pudding
2 large egg yolks
60ml / 4tbls double cream, whipped
15-30ml / 1-2tbls orange liqueur
2 small peaches, peeled, halved and stoned
100g / 4oz raspberries, defrosted if frozen
30ml / 2tbls sugar

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the Traditional rice pudding. Remove from the cooker and quickly beat in the egg yolks. Stand for 5 minutes.

2 Cool completely, then mix in the cream and liqueur.

3 Lightly oil an 850ml / 1½pt soufflé dish or straight-sided mould. Turn the rice mixture into the dish and chill for 1-2 hours.

4 Turn the chilled dessert out on to a serving dish and decorate the top with the peach halves.

5 Microwave the berries and sugar together at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Purée, then sieve. Serve with the pudding.

Strawberry and tapioca sundae

36 mins

Standing time: none

60ml / 4tbls tapioca
575ml / 1pt milk
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
few drops of vanilla flavouring
150ml / ¼pt double cream, whipped
225g / 8oz fresh strawberries

SERVES 4

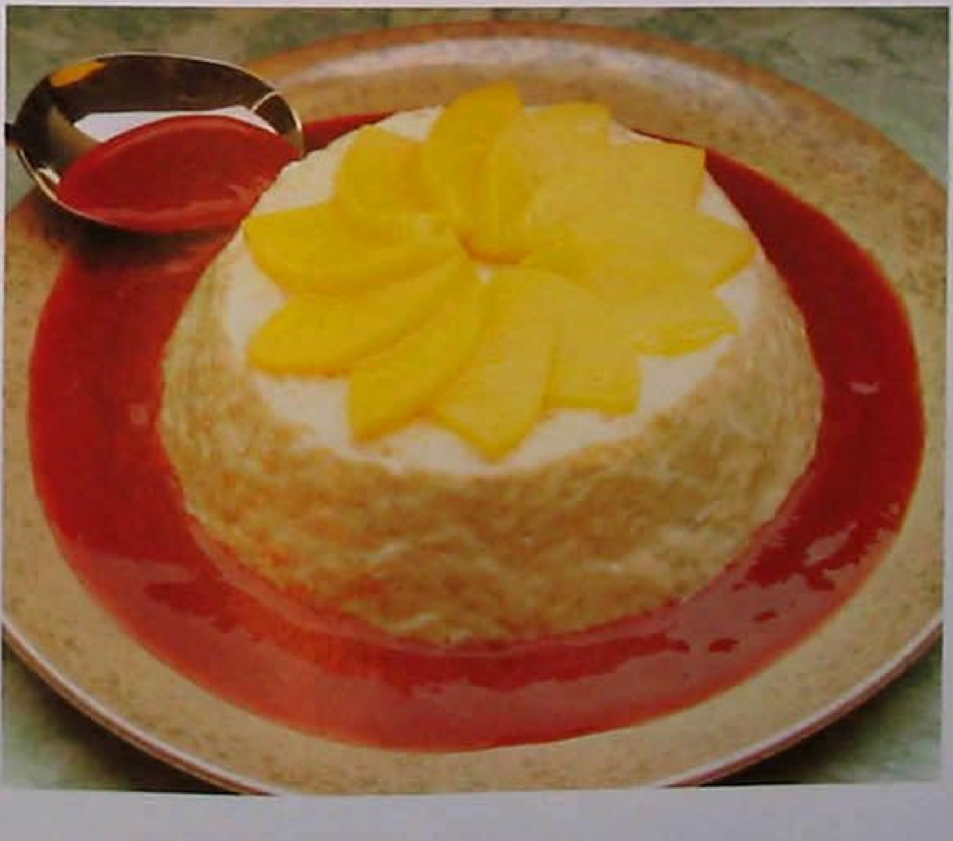
1 Rinse and drain the tapioca. Pour the milk into a 2.8L / 5pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, to boil.

2 Stir in the tapioca, sugar and vanilla. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30 minutes, stirring twice during cooking. Leave until completely cold.

3 Reserve four strawberries for decoration. Hull the remaining fruit and slice each one in half.

4 Layer the tapioca, sliced strawberries and whipped cream in four sundae glasses, finishing with a layer of cream. Top each with a strawberry and serve.

Below: *Peach Condé* **Right:** *Strawberry and Tapioca Sundae*



RAY DUNS

Cooking in clay pots

Combine something old with something new. Food placed in traditional clay pots cooks evenly and moistly in the modern microwave — and timings are as speedy as ever — so this novel method is well worth trying.

Clay pots are unglazed earthenware pots, specially designed for cooking chicken, meat, potato and fish. All these 'bricks' can be used for cooking food in the microwave, as long as they fit in the cooker. Before buying a clay pot or preparing any of the clay pot recipes, make sure the pot will fit into your microwave. Check that it is not too tall — with the lid on — and that if it has a handle it does not knock against the inside of the cooker when a turntable is in use. Most fish bricks are too long for the microwave — but one clay pot can be used for all different types of food; just be careful that delicate food is not tainted by previously-cooked food with a strong or distinctive flavour.

This means it is essential to clean the pot thoroughly each time after use (see instructions, above right).

Preparation

Soak new earthenware pots according to the manufacturer's instructions. The pot must be soaked in water every time before using; well-used pots only require about 10-15 minutes soaking. Leave to drain after soaking but do not wipe dry.

The cooking method

Clay pot cooking in the microwave produces evenly cooked and moist food. A whole chicken cooks perfectly with little danger of some areas overcooking before the thickest part of the bird is done. The result is moist and full-flavoured. The same applies to meat and vegetables. Although food may need basting and rearranging once or twice, frequent rearranging of individual pieces of food is not necessary.

Ingredients such as vegetables, herbs and spices can be added to the pot at different stages to make delicious one-pot meals.

Cleaning clay pots

Clean earthenware pots after use by scouring with plenty of salt — not detergent — then washing in hot water. If the pot is used solely for cooking potatoes, there is no need to wash it — a good wipe with absorbent paper is quite sufficient to remove any bits.

Chicken with wine and herbs

45 mins

Standing time: none

This aromatic dish of chicken and rice makes a meal by itself, but for really hearty appetites serve it with new potatoes and a green vegetable or salad.

900g-1.1kg / 2-2½lb oven-ready chicken
1 small onion, quartered lengthways
2 garlic cloves
285g / 10½oz can condensed beef consommé
125ml / 4fl oz dry white wine
125ml / 4fl oz water
5ml / 1tsp dried rosemary
5ml / 1tsp dried marjoram or mixed herbs
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz long-grain rice

SERVES 4

1 Rinse and dry the chicken. Put one onion quarter and one garlic clove inside the body cavity. Cut the second garlic clove in half and rub the cut sides all over the skin of the chicken.

2 Put the chicken in a 3.4L / 6pt soaked chicken brick and surround with remaining onion wedges. Mix the consommé with the wine, water and herbs. Season generously with salt and pepper and pour over the chicken.

3 Cover with the lid and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 minutes. Rotate the dish and baste the chicken twice during cooking. Add the rice for the last 25 minutes, making sure all grains are sprinkled into the cooking liquid. To test when the chicken is cooked, pierce the flesh near the thigh bone and check the juices run clear.

4 Carve the chicken and serve it with the rice and well-flavoured cooking stock.

Rules for clay pot care and cooking

- Check the clay pot fits in the microwave — with lid on — and that it can rotate freely on a turntable.
- Soak the pot before use, see Cook's notes below. Drain well, but do not wipe dry.
- Do not clean the pot with detergent. Scour with salt then rinse with plenty of hot water.

Cook's notes

Before use in the microwave, soak well-used pots for 10-15 minutes and follow the manufacturer's instructions for new pots.

Spare rib goulash

60
mins

Standing time: 10 mins

A hearty dish the family will love; all that is needed to accompany this tasty goulash are baked potatoes, microwaved while the ribs are standing.

1kg / 2¼lb pork spare ribs, separated
1 large onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 chicken stock cube dissolved in 150ml / ¼pt boiling water
800g / 28oz can tomatoes
8 small potatoes, cut lengthways into eight wedges
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
2-3 carrots, thinly sliced
125ml / 4fl oz red wine
10ml / 2tsp demerara sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp paprika
a pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp caraway seeds
1.5ml / ¼tsp chilli powder

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the spare ribs in a 3.4L / 6pt soaked chicken brick and add the onion and garlic. Pour in the stock, cover with the lid and cook at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, rearrange the spare ribs once.
2 Add the tomatoes, potatoes, green pepper and carrots, mixing them in well with the ribs and piling them in the middle of the pot if necessary. Mix all the remaining ingredients together; pour over meat and vegetables.
3 Re-cover and cook for a further 45 minutes at 100% (High) rearranging all the ingredients once. Leave to stand, covered, for 10 minutes before serving.

Herbed Potatoes From The Pot

RAY DUNS

Herbed potatoes from the pot

30
mins

Standing time: none

1kg / 2¼lb old potatoes, scrubbed and quartered
1 large onion, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 sprigs fresh thyme or 2 pinches dried
2 large sprigs fresh sage or 2 pinches dried
15ml / 1tbls coriander seeds, crushed
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz butter

SERVES 4-6

1 Layer the potatoes with the onions in a 2.3L / 4pt soaked potato pot, adding the bay leaves, thyme and sage between the layers. Sprinkle in the coriander and cover with the lid.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-35 minutes. Carefully rearrange the potatoes once during cooking. When the potatoes are tender, sprinkle them with seasoning and top with the butter. Shake the pot well, then serve.

VARIATIONS
Use evenly-sized, scrubbed, new potatoes with mint instead of thyme and sage and cook as above.

New England boiled dinner

79
mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is a wholesome all-in-one meal which the early Puritan settlers in North America found to be sustaining during harsh winter.

1.1-1.4kg / 2½-3lb joint of beef sirloin
1 onion, finely chopped
3 carrots, quartered lengthways
1 beef stock cube dissolved in 275ml / ½pt boiling water
2 large potatoes, cut into sixths
½ cabbage, cut into six wedges

SERVES 6

1 Trim and discard most of the fat from the meat; then place the joint with the fattiest side down in a 3.4L / 6pt soaked clay pot. Place the onion and carrots on top of the meat and pour the stock over the meat and vegetables. Cover with the lid and cook at 100% (High) for 9 minutes.

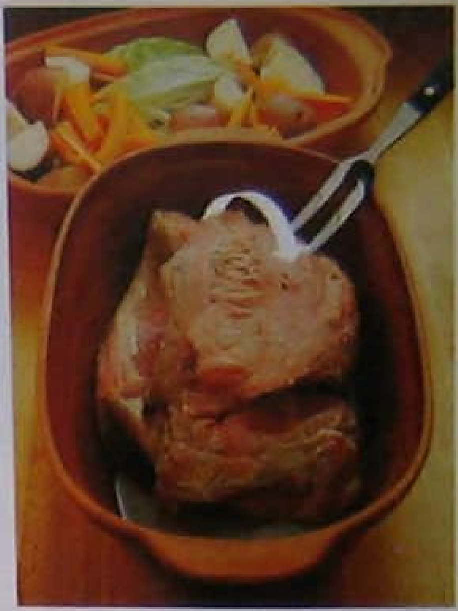
2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 30 minutes. Turn the meat over, arrange the potatoes and cabbage with the other vegetables on top of the meat; then re-cover and microwave for a further 40-45 minutes. Rotate the dish a half turn once halfway through the cooking time.

3 Leave to stand in the clay pot, with the lid on, for 10 minutes. Carve the meat thinly across the grain and serve accompanied by the vegetables and any juices in the pot.

New England Boiled Dinner, a traditional dish cooked a new way.

How to microwave New England boiled dinner

Place *the meat, fattiest side down, in a 3.4L / 6pt clay pot. Microwave, with the onion, carrots and stock, as in the recipe steps 1 and 2.*



Turn *the meat over and top with potatoes, cabbage and other vegetables and microwave for 40-45 minutes, as steps 2 and 3 in the recipe.*

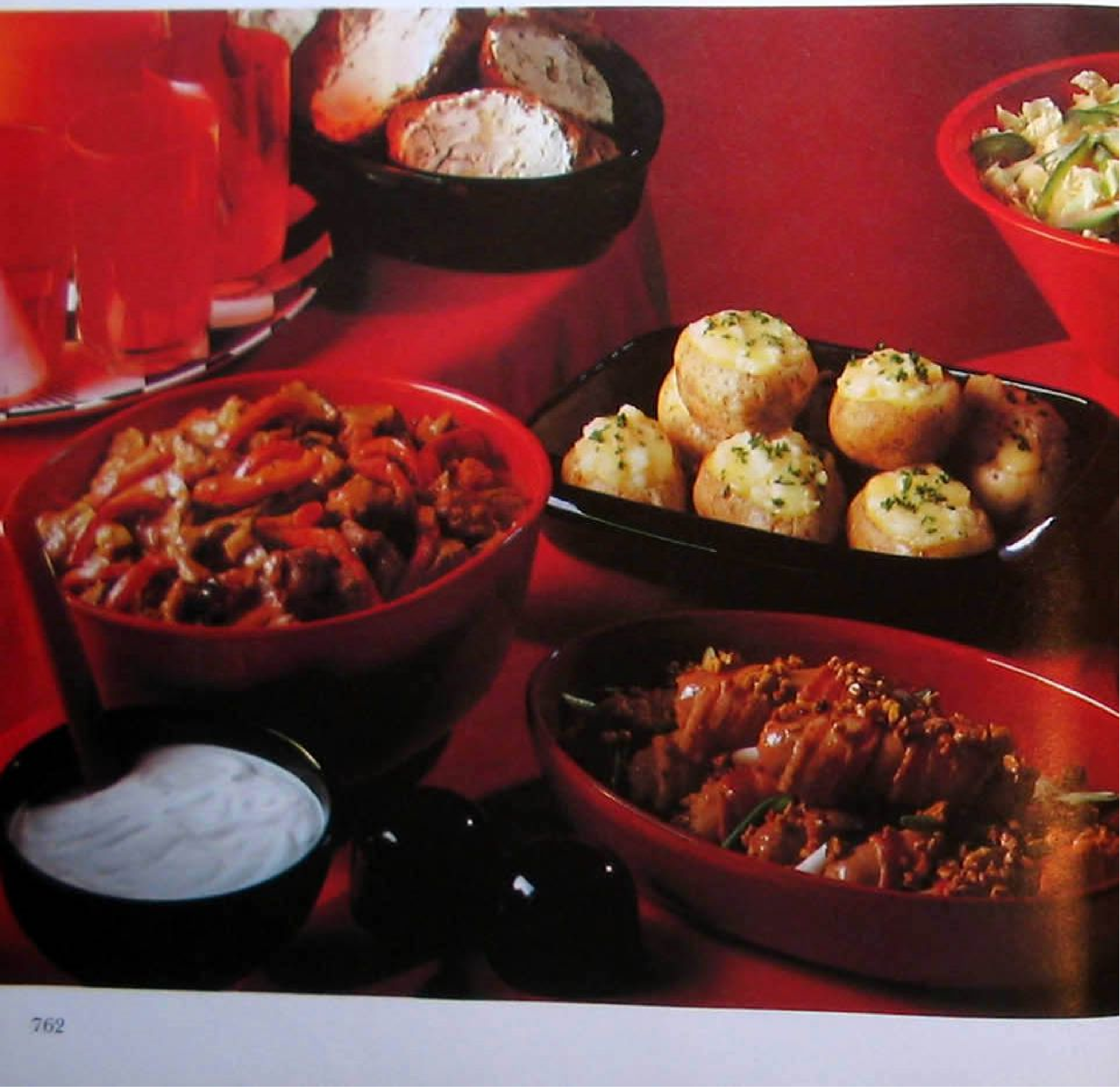
Hallowe'en party

Although Hallowe'en is a children's night for mystery and magic, this mouthwatering menu will convince you that the best magician of them all is your microwave!

Fancy dress occasions, such as Hallowe'en, are guaranteed to raise the spirits of youngsters especially when ghoulishly clad and throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the the spooky atmosphere of the party.

Using a microwave leaves you free to organise games for the children and circulate among the adults. Once you have cooked most of the dishes in advance, put up Jack o' Lanterns and set the scene for bobbing for apples and other traditional games, you can relax and enjoy a glass of your favourite witches' brew while adding the finishing touches.

Last minute reheating is ideal by microwave — the sausages and 'ghoulash' retain their juicy flavour without drying or burning, and the potatoes and bread can be cooked after your guests arrive.



Hallowe'en salad

30 secs

Standing time: none

225g-350g / 8-12oz Chinese leaves, or crisp lettuce, shredded
50g / 2oz cashew nuts
1 large green pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
75g / 3oz pineapple, coarsely chopped
1 avocado, flesh scooped out and sliced
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice

DRESSING
15ml / 1tbls honey
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
45ml / 3tbls wine vinegar
10ml / 2tsp French mustard
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
salt and pepper

SERVES 8

1 Place the Chinese leaves, cashew nuts, green pepper and chopped pineapple together in a large bowl. Mix thoroughly.

2 Toss the avocado slices in the lemon juice to coat all over. This helps to prevent discoloration. Mix the avocado into the salad, taking care not to break the pieces by stirring them too vigorously.

3 Blend the honey, oil, vingear and mustard in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until the dressing is hot. Mix well and stir in the yoghurt. Stir in salt and pepper to taste.

4 Serve the dressing with the salad, either poured on the top or handed separately in a small bowl or sauce boat. Do not swamp with dressing or salad will become limp.

CHRIS KNAGGS

MENU

Ghoulash
A hot and hearty casserole for the old uns

Spicy Sausages
Piquant porkers for kids of all ages

Cheesy Baked Potatoes
Fluffy potatoes spiked with cheese

Hallowe'en Salad
A crisp salad with an intriguing dressing

Cream Cheese Garlic Bread
Filling hot French bread with a difference

Toffee Apples
A two-way dessert for a family party

SERVES 8

Countdown

The day before

Prepare and microwave the 'ghoulash'. Allow to cool, then refrigerate overnight.

On the morning of the party

Prepare all the ingredients for the salad except the avocado. Store in individual sealed containers or in polythene bags in the refrigerator. Microwave the salad dressing and set aside.

Microwave the sausages. Cool, and cover, refrigerate.

Microwave the children's toffee apples and set on a wire rack. Remove them to a plate when hardened. Keep in a cool, dry place.

Soften the cheese for the bread and spread it between the slices of French loaf. Wrap both halves of the loaf in cling film.

Microwave the potatoes and spike the centres with pieces of cheese. Cover and set aside.

Half an hour before serving

Microwave the 'ghoulash' at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, stirring several times until heated through. Microwave the sausages at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes until hot. Meanwhile, assemble the salad, adding the avocado, sliced and tossed in lemon juice.

Microwave the potatoes, four at a time, at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, until the cheese has melted and the potatoes are hot.

Unwrap the bread, re-wrap in absorbent paper and microwave, one half at a time, at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes for each half. Serve immediately.

Serve an alcoholic witches' brew for the adults and fizzy drinks or squash for the children.

While the main course is served microwave the sesame toffee apple slices for the adults — dip in sesame seeds and serve at once with the children's toffee apples.

Ghoulash with soured cream

CHRIS KNAGGS

Ghoulash

62 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
1.1kg / 2½lb braising steak, cut in 2.5cm / 1in cubes
3 onions, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 large red pepper, seeded and cut into strips
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls paprika, plus extra for dusting
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
2 × 397g / 14oz cans tomatoes
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt soured cream, for serving

SERVES 8

1 Measure the oil into a dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Add the meat, stirring well to coat, and microwave for 10 minutes at 100% (High). Stir half way through cooking. Remove the meat with a slotted spoon and set aside

2 Add the onion, garlic, red pepper, flour, paprika and chilli to the juices left in the dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring once after 3-4 minutes.

3 Return the meat to the dish and stir in the tomatoes, salt and pepper. Cover and cook at 70% (Medium-High) for 45-60 minutes, stirring occasionally. Test the meat and check the tenderness after 45 minutes and continue, if necessary.

4 Leave the ghoulash to stand, still covered, for 15 minutes before serving. This will complete the cooking and tenderising.

5 Spoon a little soured cream on to each serving and sprinkle with a dash of extra paprika.

Cream cheese garlic bread

2½ mins

Standing time: none

1 French loaf
100g / 4oz full fat soft cheese with garlic and herbs

SERVES 8

1 Cut the loaf in half diagonally so that it will fit into the microwave. Cut each half in diagonal slices, 4cm / 1½in apart, to within 1cm / 1½in of the base, taking care not to cut right through.

2 Place the cheese in a small bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) to soften for 30-60 seconds. Spread the cheese between the slices.

3 Wrap each half of the bread in absorbent paper. Microwave one at a time at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes, until the cheese is soft and the bread is warm to the touch. Repeat with the remaining half. Serve immediately.

Spicy sausages

18 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

8 thick pork sausages
8 streaky bacon rashers, rinds removed
15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp red wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
75ml / 3fl oz water
15ml / 1tbls chopped mixed nuts
5 spring onions, sliced diagonally

SERVES 8

1 Prick the sausages all over and wrap each one in a rasher of bacon.

2 Preheat a browning dish for about 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to the manufacturer's instructions — adding the butter for the last 30 seconds.

3 Cook four sausages at a time: roll them on the hot surface to seal all over, then arrange around the outside of the dish and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

4 Turn the sausages and microwave, covered, for a further 2 minutes at 100% (High). Remove the sausages and drain on absorbent paper.

5 Pour off any excess fat and

reheat the browning dish by microwaving at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Cook the remaining sausages in the same way and drain.

6 Transfer all the sausages to a shallow dish. Mix all the remaining ingredients together and pour over the sausages. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring well after 1½ minutes. Allow the sausages to stand for 2 minutes before serving with the ghoulash.

Cook's notes

This dish will serve eight if used as part of a complete menu with the Ghoulash. If served on its own, double the quantities and cook in four batches.

Microtips

When using a browning dish, always check your microwave manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat dish longer than recommended.

Cheesy baked potatoes

28 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

8 potatoes, about 225g / 8oz each
salt
175ml / 6fl oz milk
225g / 8oz mature Cheddar cheese
30-45ml / 2-3tbls chopped parsley
cayenne pepper to sprinkle (optional)

SERVES 8

1 Prick the potatoes all over with a fork. Arrange four potatoes at a time in a ring on absorbent paper on the floor of the cooker.

2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes until just becoming tender. Cover and leave to stand for 5 minutes.

3 Repeat the procedure with the remaining potatoes.

4 After standing, carefully cut a thin slice from the top of each potato. Scoop the flesh out of the skins into a bowl. Mash well with salt to taste and the milk. Grate half the cheese and mix into the mashed potato.

5 Spoon the potato back into the skins. Cut the remaining cheese into 2.5cm / 1in-long sticks and divide them between the eight potatoes pressing firmly into the filling.

6 Microwave half of the potatoes at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until heated through and the cheese is melted. Repeat with remainder.

7 If liked, crisp the skins by placing in a hot oven for 1-2 minutes, or under a hot grill.

8 Sprinkle with parsley and cayenne, if liked, and serve.

Toffee apples

25 mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz sugar
425ml / 15fl oz water
8 apples

SERVES 8

1 Mix the sugar and water together in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes to dissolve the sugar. Microwave for 20-30 minutes, or until deep golden in colour and toffee-like in consistency.

2 Meanwhile, press a lolly stick or similar large, sturdy wooden stick into each apple through the core from the stem end.

3 When the toffee is ready, dip the apples to coat all over.

4 Drain the toffee apples on a rack, then leave them on a sheet of greaseproof paper to cool.

VARIATION

Sesame toffee apple slices: make the toffee by mixing 225g / 8oz sugar and 275ml / ½pt water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-25 minutess. Peel, core and quarter 6-8 dessert apples. Spread 60ml / 4tbls sesame seeds over a dish. Using a fork, dip the apple pieces in the toffee, then in sesame seeds to coat. Serve immediately.

Sesame Toffee Apple Slices

CHRIS KNAGGS

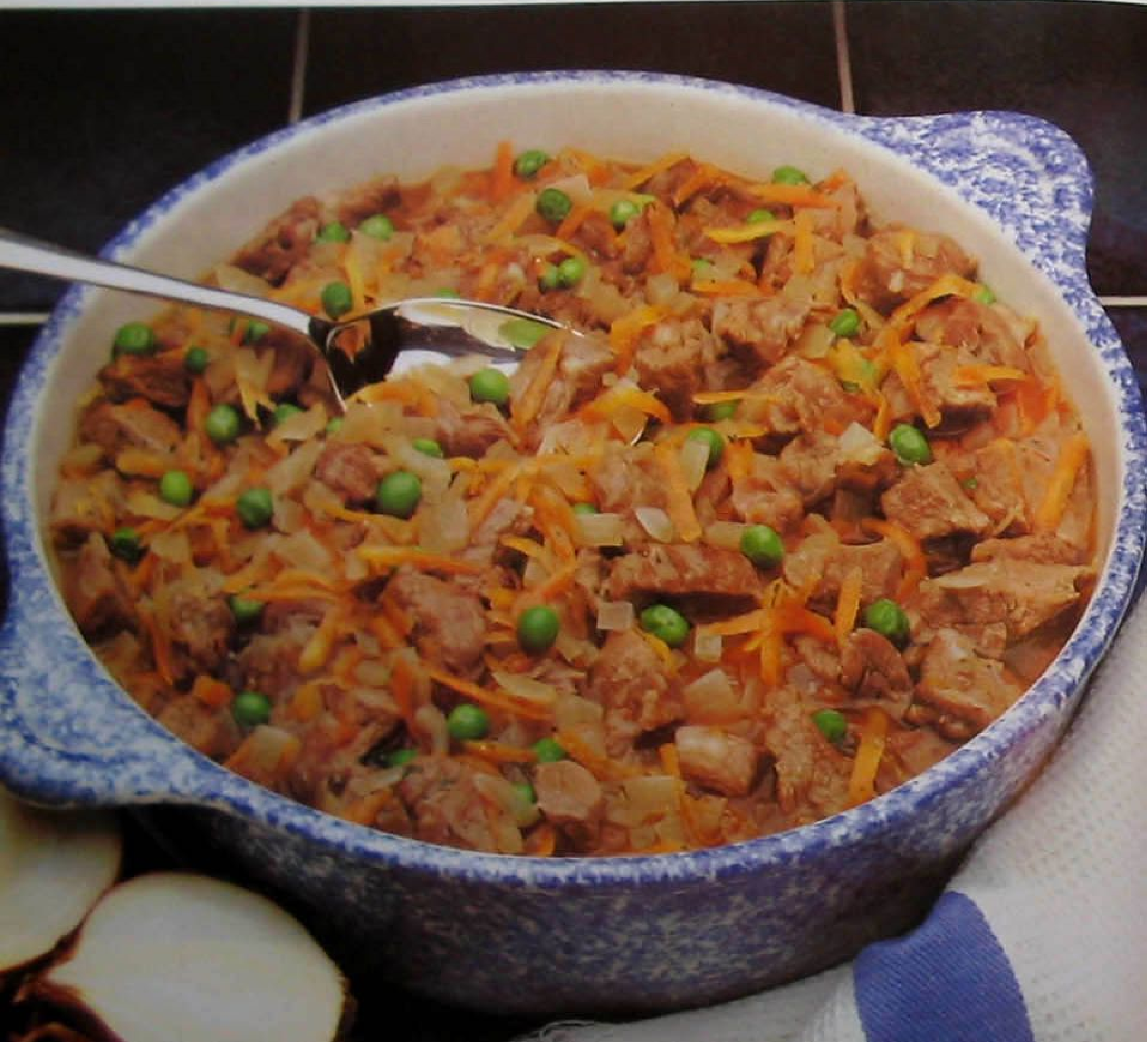
Batch cooking: lamb

Lamb mix is the perfect base for casseroles — keep batches in the freezer and you can have a delicious main dish in minutes, whenever the occasion arises.

The most time-consuming part about cooking a casserole, stew or medley of meat and vegetables is the initial assembling and tenderizing of the meat. Once this is accomplished, extra ingredients and flavourings can be added to turn a basic mix into a delicious dish in minutes.

The Basic Lamb Mix here is tasty enough to heat and eat straight away, but is equally successful divided into four batches and frozen. It then takes just 10 minutes to thaw in the microwave and is ready to heat and eat or turn into any one of three appetizing recipes.

Shoulder or leg of lamb is the most suitable cut to buy for this batch cooking as it gives a well-flavoured, fat-free mix. Cut the meat into regular sized cubes so that it will cook evenly. While cutting, trim off any excess fat to avoid greasiness in the finished dish. (Fatty meat also tends to turn rancid more quickly than lean meat — even in the freezer — so a fatty casserole will not keep as long as one with all the fat removed.)



Basic Lamb Mix with peas

After cooking, cool the mix quickly, then divide between freezer containers or bags and chill thoroughly before freezing. Label clearly and freeze for up to four months.

When thawing, use a fork to break up the block as soon as it is soft enough and stir well. This speeds thawing and prevents some parts over-cooking before the rest is ready. Leave the mix to stand for 5 minutes to ensure it is completely thawed before adding further ingredients. The thawing and standing time for a container of basic mix is not included in the recipe time boxes.

Basic lamb mix

30 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1.8kg / 4lb boned shoulder of lamb, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
1 onion, finely chopped
1 carrot, coarsley grated
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper
1 chicken stock cube
275ml / ½pt water
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice

MAKES 4 CONTAINERS OF MIX

Microtips

This Basic Lamb Mix is delicious as a dish in its own right and can be served simply with the addition of frozen peas for colour. Just microwave 225g / 8oz frozen peas with 30ml / 2tbls water at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes; set aside. Thaw one batch of frozen mix (see Steps 5, and 6, below), stir in the peas and continue microwaving at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once. Garnish with parsley, if wished, and serve with boiled potatoes tossed in butter.

How to microwave Basic lamb mix

Place *all the ingredients except the water and lemon juice in a large casserole. Mix evenly together with a spoon, then stir in the water and lemon juice.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, or until the lamb is no longer pink, stirring the mixture very thoroughly twice during the cooking time.*

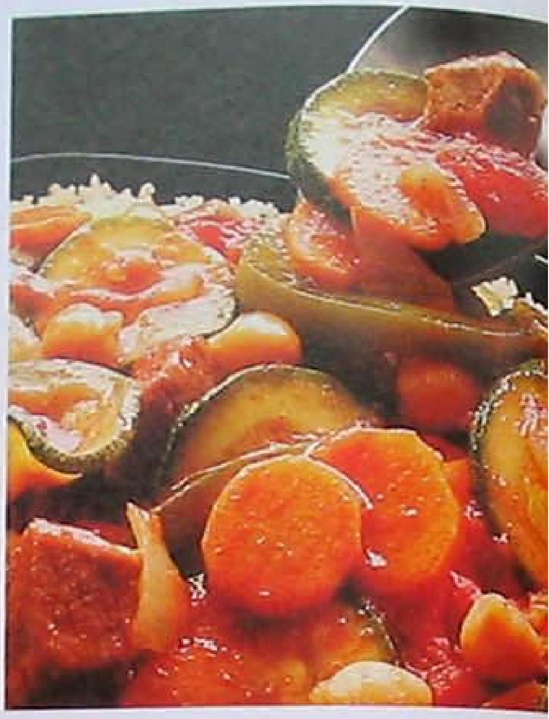
Reduce *power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 15-20 minutes, stirring twice. Test lamb for tenderness by piercing with a fork. Let stand for 5 minutes to tenderise completely.*

How to freeze and thaw Basic lamb mix

To freeze, *cool, then divide the lamb and gravy equally between four freezer containers or bags and chill. Seal, using plastic ties for the bags, then label and freeze up to four months.*

To thaw, *uncover one container or pierce the freezer bag. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes until the meat is loosened, then tip into a casserole.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for a further 8-10 minutes, turning over and separating the pieces as they thaw. Let stand for 5 minutes before using in the recipes or reheating.*



Italian-style lamb casserole

12 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 10 mins

1 onion, cut into eight wedges
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
225g / 8oz frozen cut green beans
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
400g / 14oz can tomatoes, drained, juice reserved
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary
1 container Basic Lamb Mix, thawed (see page 767)
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion and oil in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Add the frozen beans, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the beans are just tender, stirring once.

2 Stir in the mushrooms, tomatoes, basil, rosemary and lamb mix. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until heated through, stirring twice.

3 Stir in up to 75ml / 3fl oz of reserved tomato juice if more sauce is preferred. Let stand for 3-5 minutes. Season to taste and serve with pasta tossed in butter.

Italian-style Lamb Casserole

Tunisian-style Lamb

Tunisian-style lamb

19½ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 10 mins

1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
½ green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cumin
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground coriander
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
3-4 courgettes, sliced
2-3 carrots, thinly sliced
396g / 14oz can tomatoes, drained, juice reserved
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée or paste
439g / 15oz can chick-peas, drained
450g / 1lb Basic Lamb Mix, thawed (see page 767)
salt and pepper

TO SERVE
½ chicken stock cube
575ml / 1pt hot water
225g / 8oz burghul (see Cook's notes, right)

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the onion, oil, and green pepper in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in cumin, coriander, paprika, courgettes, carrots and 60ml / 4tbls tomato juice.

2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes until the carrots are tender, stirring twice. Stir in the tomatoes with a little juice, tomato purée or paste, chick-peas and lamb mix

3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until heated through, stirring twice. Add more tomato juice to the sauce if liked. Let stand for 3-5 minutes. Season to taste.

4 Combine the burghul and stock cube in a bowl. Add the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until boiling. Stir in the burghul. Cover and leave for 5-8 minutes until the burghul has absorbed the liquid and is tender.

5 Fluff up the burghul with a fork and arrange round a large serving dish. Spoon the lamb into the centre. If necessary cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to heat through.

Lamb stew with wine

14 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 10 mins

1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 large potato, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
1 bay leaf
30ml / 2tbls water
275g / 10oz packet frozen mixed vegetables
75ml / 5tbls medium dry white wine
5ml / 1tsp redcurrant or cranberry jelly
1 container Basic Lamb Mix, thawed (see page 767)
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place onion, garlic, potato, thyme, marjoram, parsley, bay leaf, and water in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until the vegetables are almost tender, stirring once during cooking.

2 Add the frozen vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, until all vegetables are tender; stir twice.

3 Stir in the wine, jelly and lamb mix. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until heated through. Let stand for 3-5 minutes. Remove the bay leaf and season to taste.

Cook's notes

Burghul, or bulgar wheat, is a very popular ingredient in North African cookery. It is sold pre-cooked, and only needs softening in liquid before serving. It is available from health food stores and some delicatessens. Couscous, see page 600, can be used in place of burghul if preferred. If hard to obtain, serve the lamb on a bed of fluffy cooked rice instead.

Lamb Stew with Wine

White fish steaks

Tender white fish steaks take only minutes to cook in the microwave. Serve them simply with a savoury butter, or combine with a colourful sauce or crunchy topping.

Choice cuts of white fish sold as steaks and cutlets have a delicate — but definite — flavour that makes them ideal for serving plainly cooked with a simple garnish or pat of savoury butter. Choose cod, turbot, halibut, monk fish * and brill. The meaty texture of these fish is excellent for risottos and gratins, or cut into chunks for kebabs. Moreover the flesh does not break up when cooked.

The way you arrange the steaks in the microwave influences the cooking time. Place the thinner parts towards the centre of the dish, where they will cook more slowly. Don't forget that the fish will continue cooking during standing.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use warhou, ling or gem fish.

Lemon cod steaks

8 mins

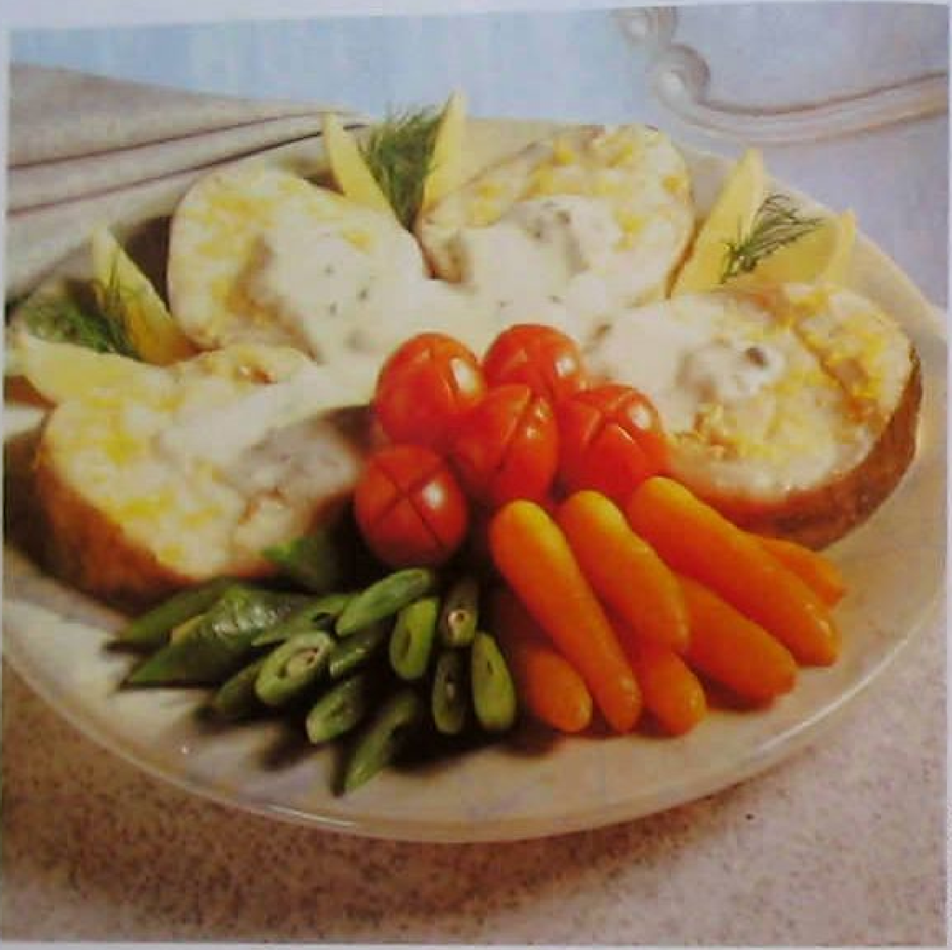
Standing time: 2-3 mins

4 cod steaks, about 1kg / 2lb weight
juice of ½ lemon
grated zest of 1 lemon
4 sprigs fresh dill or 5ml / 1tsp dillweed
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, diced
parsley or dill and lemon wedges, to garnish
Rich caper sauce (see recipe page 771) to serve

SERVES 4

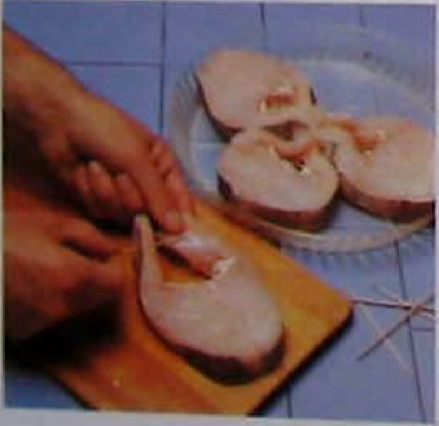
VARIATION

Lemon cod steaks for two: prepare 2 steaks in the same way. Arrange in a shallow dish, side by side, but facing in opposite directions. Top and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, turning dish once during cooking. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

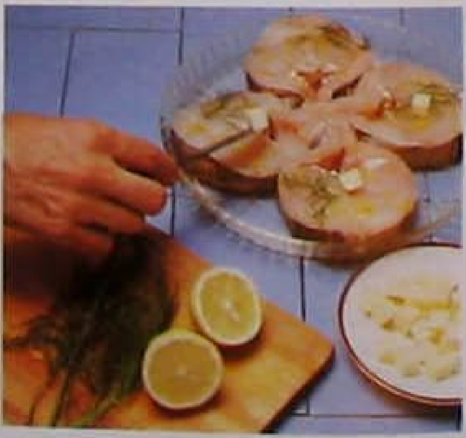


CHRIS KNAGGS

How to microwave Lemon cod steaks



Fold *in the ends of the steaks neatly and secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Arrange in a large shallow dish, with cocktail sticks towards the centre. Sprinkle with the lemon juice and zest. Top with dill sprigs or sprinkle with dillweed.*



Dot *with the butter or margarine. Cover with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Give dish a quarter turn; microwave for a further 4-5 minutes. Leave to stand, covered, for 2-3 minutes. Garnish to serve.*

Rich caper sauce

6½ mins

Standing time: none

The extra butter gives this sauce a smooth, velvety texture.

75g / 3oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
1 bay leaf
30ml / 2tbls capers, chopped
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Melt 25g / 1oz of the butter in a covered 1.1L / 2pt basin at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds. Whisk in the flour, then gradually whisk in the milk. Add the bay leaf.
2 Microwave at 100% for 3-4 minutes, whisking once during cooking and thoroughly at the end. Remove the bay leaf.
3 Whisk in the remaining butter or margarine in small pieces and continue whisking until melted. Stir in the capers.
4 Return the sauce to the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3 minutes. Whisk thoroughly, season and serve.

Fish gratin

10¼ mins

Standing time: none

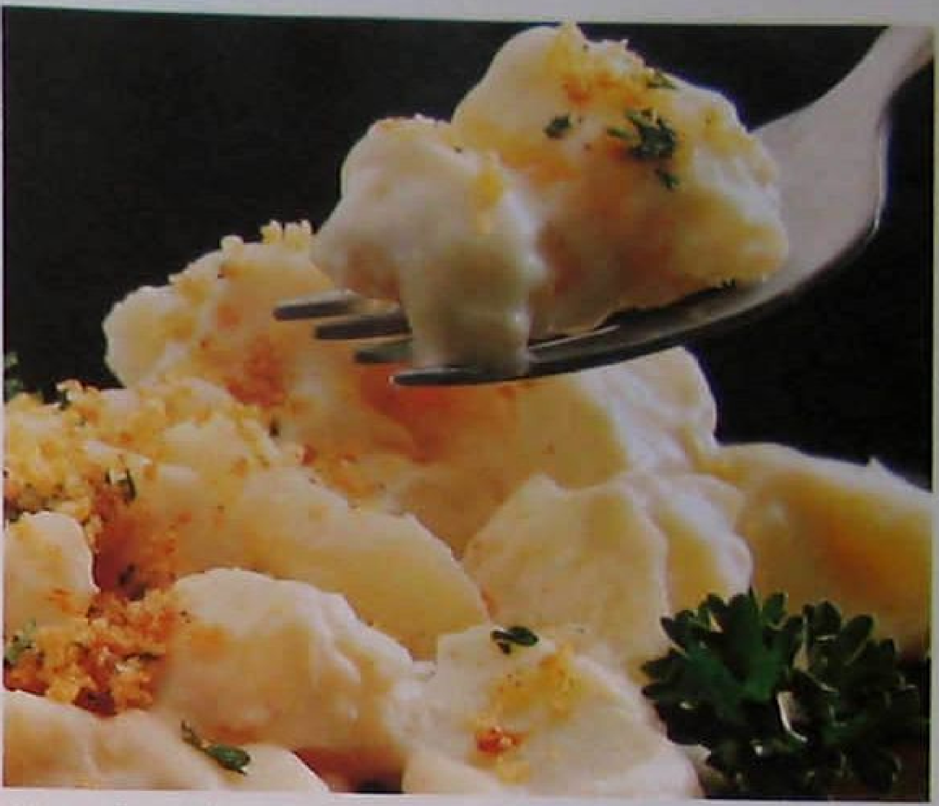
450g / 1lb monk fish, halibut or cod steak portions

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
pinch of grated nutmeg
275ml / ½pt milk or 150ml / ¼pt milk and 150ml / ¼pt single cream

TOPPING
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls brown breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp finely chopped parsley

SERVES 2-4

Above left: *Lemon Cod Steaks*
Above right: *Fish Gratin*



How to microwave Fish gratin

Place *fish in a large dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, turning once. Melt butter at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds. Whisk in flour, seasoning and nutmeg.*

Whisk *in milk gradually until thoroughly blended. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until the sauce has thickened. Whisk once during cooking and again at the end.*

Drain *and flake fish, discarding skin and bones, then stir into sauce. Melt the butter for the topping in a small bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir the breadcrumbs into the butter with the chopped parsley.*

Sprinkle *the breadcrumb topping evenly over the dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until heated through. Garnish with parsley sprigs and serve with potatoes and a green vegetable.*

Haddock Mediterranean

Haddock Mediterranean

8 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
1 small onion, coarsely grated
1 small courgette, coarsely grated
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
black pepper
4 haddock steaks, about 450g / 1lb total weight
1 small red pepper, seeded and cut into fine strips
parsley sprigs to garnish

SERVES 2-4

1 Mix the celery with the onion, courgette, parsley and lemon juice. Add pepper to taste.

2 Arrange the fish in a large oblong or round dish, placing the steaks as far apart as possible. Top each piece with a quarter of the courgette mixture, piling it neatly on top. Add the strips of red pepper.

3 Cover the dish with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, rearranging the pieces of fish once during cooking.

4 Leave the fish, covered, to stand for 2-3 minutes before serving. Garnish each portion with a sprig of parsley and serve with new potatoes.

Cook's notes

A pat of savoury butter is a quick and effective way to perk up a simply cooked fish steak. The following make enough for 4 steaks or cutlets. Pack the prepared butter in a small dish or form into a roll. Cover and chill for 1½-2 hours before serving.

Anchovy butter: *Mash half a 25g / 1oz drained canned anchovy fillets with a little oil from the can. Beat into 40g / 1½oz butter. Add lemon juice and pepper to taste and 15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley.*

Herb butter: *beat 30ml / 2tbls chopped fresh herbs, such as tarragon, parsley, or dill into 75g / 3oz softened butter. If liked, substitute 5ml / 1tsp dried herbs for fresh.*

Microtips

If you do not have a roasting rack cook the kebabs in a large roasting bag. Pierce bag in several places, place kebabs in the bag after brushing with soy sauce mixture. Secure the end loosely with a rubber band to allow steam to escape during cooking.

Fish kebabs

8 mins

Standing time: none

You need four wooden (not metal) skewers, 25-30cm / 10-12in long, for this recipe. If they are shorter you may need more than four.

450g / 1lb halibut steaks
1 small onion, quartered
1 large green pepper, seeded and cut into 2.5cm / 1in chunks
2 small tomatoes, halved
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
2 small garlic cloves, crushed

SERVES 4

1 Skin the halibut steak and cut the fish off the central bone in neat chunks; keep the pieces as equal in size as possible.

2 Separate the onion quarters into layers. Thread on to the skewers with fish, green pepper and tomatoes, putting the tomato halves in the centre of each kebab. Lay the skewers on a roasting rack or large flat dish.

3 Mix the soy sauce with the lemon juice and garlic. Brush a little over the kebabs. Cover with vented cling film.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Uncover the kebabs and turn them over, rearranging them in the dish. Brush with remaining soy sauce mixture. Re-cover and microwave for a further 4 minutes. Arrange on a bed of cooked rice to serve.

Fish Kebabs

Hot salads

The idea of a hot salad is not as unusual as it may seem. Hot potato and other vegetable salads are widely popular on the Continent and lettuce salads with a hot dressing are delicious as well as novel.

The microwave is invaluable for making hot salads. Dressings can be cooked in seconds, while microwaved salad vegetables retain their crisp texture, firm shape and bright, appetizing colour. Because the vegetables are microwaved in such a little water, none of their goodness is wasted. An extra bonus is that dried herbs, whether in a dressing or as a flavoursome addition to the main ingredient, quickly release their flavour when heated in the microwave.

With the microwave, much of the preparation for making hot salads can be done in advance. Vegetables can be cooked, if necessary, and the dressing prepared and cooked. A few minutes in the microwave, just before serving, will heat through the combined salad vegetables and dressing to just the right point.

Many of the recipes here make a lively accompaniment to a hot or cold main dish. The more substantial dishes, such as the chicken salad on page 774 or the turkey-filled tomatoes on page 776 make a satisfying and unusual main course in their own right — try them and see!

Orange and Almond Salad

Orange and almond salad

1 min

Standing time: none

This fresh and fruity salad is good with pork and ham.

1 crisp lettuce, separated into leaves
5 spring onions, chopped
75ml / 5tbls vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp celery seeds
salt and pepper
300g / 11oz can mandarin orange segments, drained
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds, toasted (see Microtips)

SERVES 4

Harvard Beets

1 Place the lettuce leaves in a large bowl.

2 Combine the spring onions, oil, vinegar, sugar, celery seeds and seasoning in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until boiling, stirring twice.

3 Stir the mandarin orange segments into the dressing. Pour over the lettuce and toss gently. Sprinkle over the toasted almonds and serve immediately.

Microtips

To toast the almonds, place them in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, until brown. Stir once.

Harvard beets

5½ mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 1tbls sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
salt and pepper
2 × 340g / 12oz jars sliced beetroot, drained with 175ml / 6fl oz liquid reserved

SERVES 6

1 Combine the sugar, cornflour and seasoning in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Blend in the reserved beetroot liquid and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes until thick. Stir every minute.

2 Mix in the beetroot slices and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until hot.

Hot chicken salad

4 mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
350g / 12oz cooked chicken meat, cubed
26 blanched almonds, split
2.5ml / ½tsp soy sauce
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls brandy
15ml / 1tbls water
2-3 drops Tabasco sauce
1 crisp lettuce, shredded
100g / 4oz green grapes, halved and seeded

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion, pepper and butter in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until vegetables are tender but crisp.

2 Stir in remaining ingredients except lettuce and grapes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until hot. Stir once.

3 Mix in lettuce and grapes.

German Potato Salad

German potato salad

16½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Sliced potatoes make a delicious hot salad. Cooked in the microwave they keep their shape well. Choose waxy potatoes — floury ones tend to break up when cooked.

450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into 6mm / ¼in thick slices
60-90ml / 4-6tbls water
4 bacon rashers
1 onion, chopped
7.5ml / 1½tsp sugar
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp celery seed
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt water
50ml / 2fl oz vinegar

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the potatoes with the water into a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until tender, stirring once. Stand for 3 minutes.

2 Place the bacon on a rack in a large rectangular dish. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until crisp. Place the bacon on absorbent paper to drain.

3 Remove the rack and add the onion to the bacon fat. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, until the onion is tender.

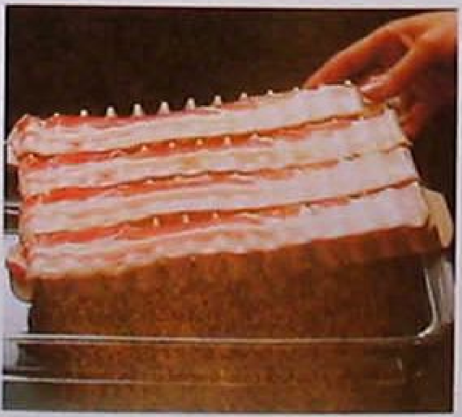
4 Stir in the sugar, flour and seasonings. Gradually blend in the water and vinegar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the dressing thickens, stirring once.

5 Crumble the bacon into the dressing, then add the potatoes. Stir gently and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes to heat through. Serve immediately.

Microtips

If you do not have a microwave rack, the bacon can be placed directly in the dish. After cooking, reserve the fat and drain the bacon on absorbent paper.

How to microwave German potato salad



Place *bacon on a rack in a large, rectangular dish to catch the drippings. Cover with absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until crisp.*

Make *the dressing using the bacon drippings. Then crumble in the cooked bacon and carefully stir in the potato slices. Heat through for 1-2 minutes and serve.*

Cooked coleslaw

5½ mins

Standing time: none

The caraway seeds add a distinctive flavour to this slaw; serve it as an accompaniment to cold meats, pork pies or with bread and cheese.

350g / 12oz white cabbage, shredded
30ml / 2tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls single cream
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp caraway seeds

SERVES 4

1 Combine the cabbage, water and butter in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until tender.

2 Drain the cabbage and stir in the remaining ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds to heat through, then serve.

Creamy turkey in tomato cups

3¼ mins

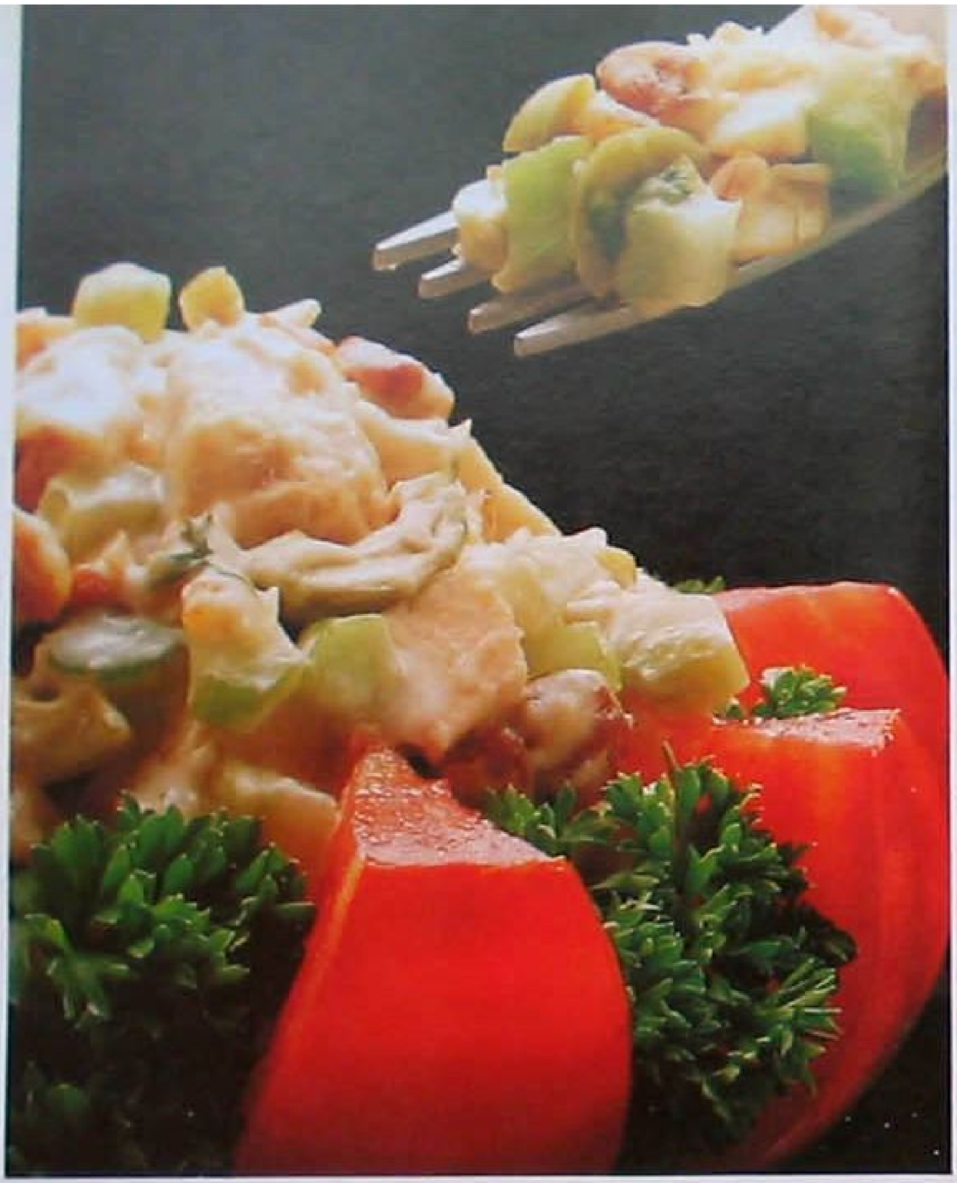
Standing time: none

This dish serves 2 as a light main course, or 4 as a starter.

4 large tomatoes
225g / 8oz cooked turkey meat, cut into bit-sized pieces
2 celery stalks, finely sliced
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
50g / 2oz pimiento-stuffed olives, chopped
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
parsley sprigs, to garnish

DRESSING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
150ml / ¼pt single cream
30ml / 2tbls milk

SERVES 2-4



Creamy Turkey in Tomato Cups

1 Prepare the tomato cups (see Cook's Notes, opposite. Place in the refrigerator until required.

2 Combine the turkey, celery, walnuts, olives, mayonnaise, lemon juice, parsley and salt and pepper to taste in a large bowl. Set on one side until needed.

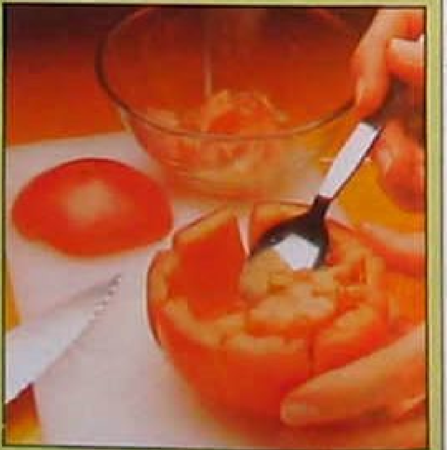
3 To make the dressing; melt the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the flour and mustard powder, then gradually blend in the cream and milk with a wooden spoon or whisk; until smooth.

4 Microwave the dressing at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every 30 seconds. Stir thoroughly into the turkey salad.

5 Pile the turkey salad into the centre of the prepared tomato cups. Garnish each cup with sprigs of fresh parsley then serve immediately.

Cook's notes

To make tomato cups: remove any stalks then stand each tomato stalk end down. Cut a thin slice from the top then cut into eight wedges without cutting right through the base. Carefully ease the sections open and scoop out the pulp from the centre.



Drumsticks

Cheap, cheerful and convenient — chicken and turkey drumsticks are the answer when you need a tasty meal in a hurry. Your microwave cooks them quickly and keeps them juicy and tender.

Readily available chicken and turkey drumsticks are a boon when you have to provide a quick, inexpensive meal. They need little preparation, other than a wipe over with a damp cloth, and can be cooked plainly, with a brush of oil and a sprinkling of herbs, such as thyme or tarragon.

It takes just a little extra time, however, to turn this everyday meat into a special treat. Cover each plump drumstick in a crunchy coating and serve as 'finger food' or with a crisp salad, or cook in a golden lemon egg glaze or minty yoghurt sauce that becomes richer and more concentrated during cooking.

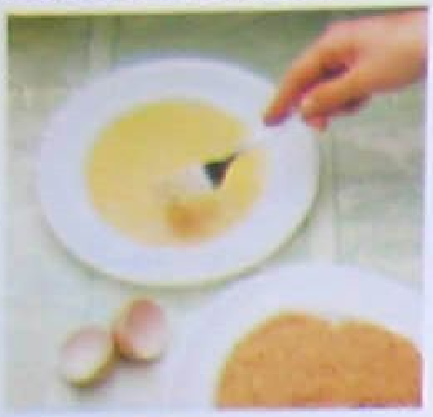
If you have a browning dish, use this to crisp the skin to a golden brown. Otherwise, remove the skin before cooking, or give it an appetizing colour and extra flavour by brushing with a browning agent, such as soy sauce, paprika pepper or yeast extract.

However you choose to cook the drumsticks, cooking times are easy — 17-20 minutes for 8 drumsticks, (the shorter time is for a 700W oven), 8-10 minutes for 4 and so on (see the chart on page 779).

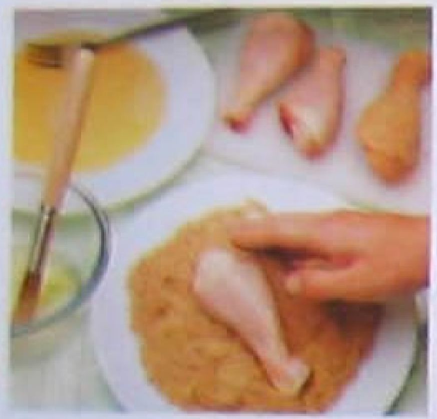
Lemon-glazed Drumsticks

RAY DUNS

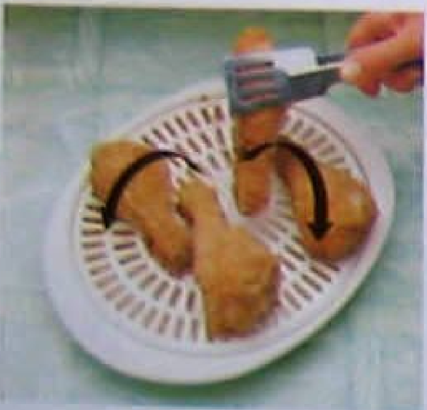
How to microwave Coated drumsticks



Thoroughly *mix the crushed crackers and poultry seasoning together on a large plate. Beat the egg lightly in a shallow dish. Lightly brush each drumstick with oil.*



Roll *drumsticks in coating and press on firmly. Roll in egg, press on another layer of coating. Place drumsticks on rack, bony sides down, meatiest parts to outside.*



RAY DUNS

Microwave *on 100% (High) for 8 minutes or until juices run clear. Turn the drumsticks over halfway through cooking time. Leave to stand for 2 minutes before serving.*

Savoury cracker coating

8
mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Crunchy, savoury coatings add variety, extra flavour and contrasting texture to succulent drumsticks. They also protect the lean flesh from becoming overcooked and dry. Be sure that the drumsticks are evenly moistened with egg or coating will not stick.

If you do not like chicken skin, you can remove it before coating.

100g / 4oz salted wheat crackers, finely crushed
10ml / 2tsp poultry seasoning
1 egg
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil

SERVES 4

Left to right: *Wheatflake Coating, Coconut Crumb Coating, Savoury Cracker Coating, Poppy Seed Coating, Herbed Coating.*

Freezer notes

Cooked coated drumsticks freeze well for up to 4 months and the coating stays crisp when thawed in the microwave. Prepare them ahead for picnics, or for filling snacks.

Slimmer's notes

Chicken drumsticks are lean and ideal for slimmers. Most of the fat is found in the skin, so save calories by removing the skin with a knife before cooking.

Microtips

Cook coated drumsticks on a roasting rack, so they crisp on all sides. If you do not have a rack, cook on a plate, but don't turn them over during cooking — this keeps the uppermost surface crisp.

Coating variations

More crunchy coatings to ring the changes. To coat and cook, see the steps left; for cooking times, see the chart below. Except for the wheatflake variation, far right, there is no need to coat the drumsticks twice.

- **Coconut:** combine 75g / 3oz dried breadcrumbs with 75ml / 5tbls desiccated coconut and 10ml / 2tsp dried parsley. Season to taste.
- **Poppy seed:** mix 10ml / 2tsp poppy seeds with 75g / 3oz golden* breadcrumbs. Sprinkle each drumstick lightly with garlic salt halfway through cooking time.
- **Sesame seed:** mix 10ml / 2tsp sesame seeds with 75g / 3oz golden* breadcrumbs. Sprinkle drumsticks with celery salt.
- **Herb:** mix 100g / 4oz parsley and thyme brown breadcrumb stuffing mix, lightly crushed, with 2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt.
- **Wheatflake:** crush 100g / 4oz wheat flakes. Brush drumsticks thoroughly with oil. Roll in coating, press on firmly. Then roll in beaten egg and press on another layer of coating.
- **Tarragon and onion:** combine 5ml / 1tsp chopped fresh tarragon (or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried), and 15ml / 1tbls minced onion with 75g / 3oz golden* breadcrumbs.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use browned breadcrumbs.

Microwave times for coated drumsticks

QUANTITY	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	STANDING TIME
2 (total weight 200g / 7oz)	3-5 minutes	1 minute
4 (total weight 400g / 14oz)	8-10 minutes	2 minutes
8 (total weight 800g / 1¾lb)	17-20 minutes	5 minutes

Microtips

If you have a browning dish or griddle use it to give chicken skin a crisp golden finish. There is no need to add any extra fat when browning on a microwave griddle, but it is best to give the drumsticks a coating of oil to prevent sticking if cooking them in a browning dish.

Lemon-glazed drumsticks

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Remove the skins from the drumsticks so that the flavour of the lemon juice can soak right into the chicken flesh.

8 drumsticks, about 800g / 1¾lb total weight
1 large lemon
2 egg yolks

SERVES 4

1 Using a sharp knife, cut the skin away from the bony end of the drumsticks. Place drumsticks in a large dish.
2 Cut eight thin slices from the lemon, squeeze juice from remaining half and pour over drumsticks. Arrange a slice of lemon on each. Cover dish with cling film and marinate for 3-4 hours.
3 Drain drumsticks, reserving the marinade, and transfer them to a roasting rack. Arrange bony side up with fleshiest parts to outside. Microwave on 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
4 Mix 10ml / 2tsp of reserved marinade with the egg yolks.
5 Remove lemon slices from drumsticks and set aside. Brush drumsticks with egg and lemon glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
6 Turn drumsticks over and brush with glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, glazing again after 5 minutes.
7 Arrange a lemon slice over bony end of each drumstick. Leave to stand for 5 minutes before serving, garnished with parsley.

Stuffed drumsticks

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 large chicken or small turkey drumsticks (225g / 8oz each)

STUFFING
125g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
50g / 2oz dried breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp mixed dried herbs
15ml / 1tbls finely chopped onion
salt
75ml / 5tbls oil

SAUCE
275ml / ½pt tomato juice
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
125g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

1 Pull back skin over fleshiest part of each drumstick. Combine the stuffing ingredients and divide into four. Push a quarter between the skin and flesh of each drumstick. Pull the skin back over the stuffing and secure with a wooden cocktail stick.
2 Arrange the drumsticks in a large shallow dish, meatiest parts to the outside. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
3 Combine sauce ingredients, except mushrooms, seasoning well. Arrange mushrooms over drumsticks. Spoon sauce over and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, basting with sauce twice during cooking time. The drumsticks are cooked when the juices run clear.
4 Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving.

Maryland drumsticks

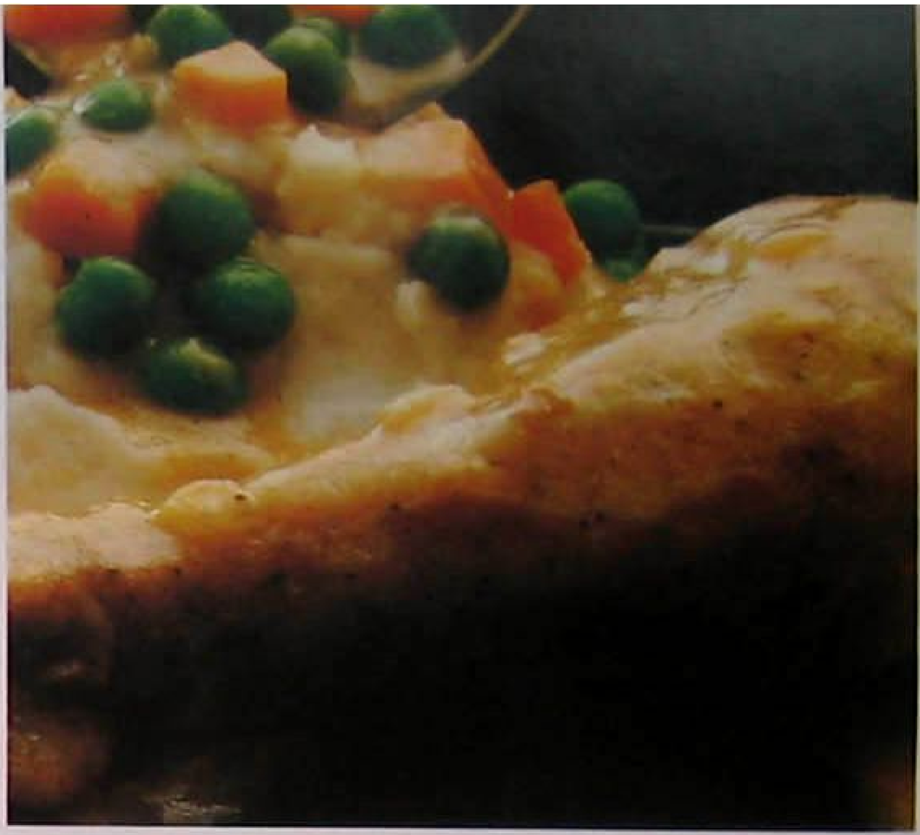
20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz salted wheat crackers, crushed
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika, plus extra for dusting
150ml / ¼pt milk
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
325g / 11½oz can sweetcorn kernels
4 spring onions, chopped
8 drumsticks, about 800g / 1¾lb total weight
a little oil for brushing

SERVES 4

1 Mix 30ml / 2tbls crushed crackers with the paprika and set aside.
2 Combine remaining cracker crumbs, milk, egg, flour, sweetcorn and onions in a 30cm / 12in round dish.
3 Arrange drumsticks on top, bone side up. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
4 Remove drumsticks and stir sweetcorn mixture. Brush the least well done parts of the drumsticks with oil and roll them in the reserved crumbs. Arrange on top of the corn, crumbed side up. Shake extra paprika pepper on top for colour.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, or until the juices run clear.
6 Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving.



Drumsticks in wine sauce

27 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

350g / 12oz packet frozen peas and carrots
8 drumsticks, about 800g / 1¾lb total weight
285g / 10.4oz can cream of chicken soup
1 small onion, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp poultry seasoning
salt
large pinch dry mustard
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine

SERVES 4

1 Pierce the packet of frozen vegetables. Microwave in packet, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until thawed. Set aside.
2 Arrange the drumsticks, bony side up, in a large shallow dish. Combine soup, onion, seasonings and wine and pour 15ml / 1tbls over each drumstick. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Turn drumsticks and pour over another 15ml / 1tbls wine sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Repeat twice.
4 Remove drumsticks to serving plate, cover and leave to stand for 5 minutes.
5 Meanwhile, add peas and carrots to dish with remaining sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Serve the vegetables in sauce with the drumsticks, together with mashed potatoes.

Far left: *Stuffed Drumsticks*
Left: *Maryland Drumsticks*
Above: *Drumsticks in Wine Sauce*

Herby yoghurt drumsticks

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 drumsticks, total weight 800g / 1¾lb
15ml / 3tsp finely chopped mixed fresh herbs, or 15ml / 3tsp concentrated mint sauce
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 Arrange the drumsticks on a roasting rack or large plate, bony side up and fleshiest part to the outside.
2 Mix herbs or sauce into yoghurt, then brush liberally over chicken.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Turn drumsticks over, brush with the yoghurt mixture and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, brushing with glaze again after 5 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Vegetarian menu for four

Use the microwave to show off some all-important features of vegetarian cuisine — flavour, appearance and texture — for a meatless menu to tempt non-vegetarian friends as well.

Microwaving is the perfect way to cook vegetables and meatless dishes; all the goodness is captured in the food and not dissolved in large quantities of cooking liquid or destroyed by overcooking. Colours stay appetizing and bright and vegetables keep a good shape and texture.

This vegetarian menu makes the best possible use of all the advantages. The mushroom pâté, which includes cannellini beans for their protein, fibre and deliciously 'mealy' texture, can be served as a dip if preferred with the addition of a little more lemon juice or some yoghurt. In the main course, the aubergines are cleverly used to line the dish and hold a satisfying pasta mixture. Unlike conventionally cooked aubergines, they keep a fresh, light colour when microwaved to give the dish an appetizing appearance. Finally, the slightly tart taste of puréed apricots combined with almond macaroons produces an irresistible dessert.

PAUL WEBSTER

Countdown

The day before
Soak the apricots for the dessert in the morning. Microwave and assemble the dessert later in the day, and leave to chill overnight. Prepare the Mushroom Pâté and cover closely with cling film. Chill.

During the day
Prepare all the vegetables for the main course and keep crisp in individual polythene bags in the refrigerator. Assemble the Aubergine Bake and set aside, covered.

Half an hour before serving
Turn out the dessert and return to the refrigerator. Microwave the turnips and French beans. Set aside. Microwave the Aubergine Bake at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes and leave to stand for 5 minutes while the Mushroom Pâté is served. Reheat the sauce, turnips and beans at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Add butter to the beans and parsley to the potatoes. Turn the Aubergine Bake out and serve with the sauce.

MENU

Mushroom Pâté
A light spreading pâté served
with crisp wholemeal rolls

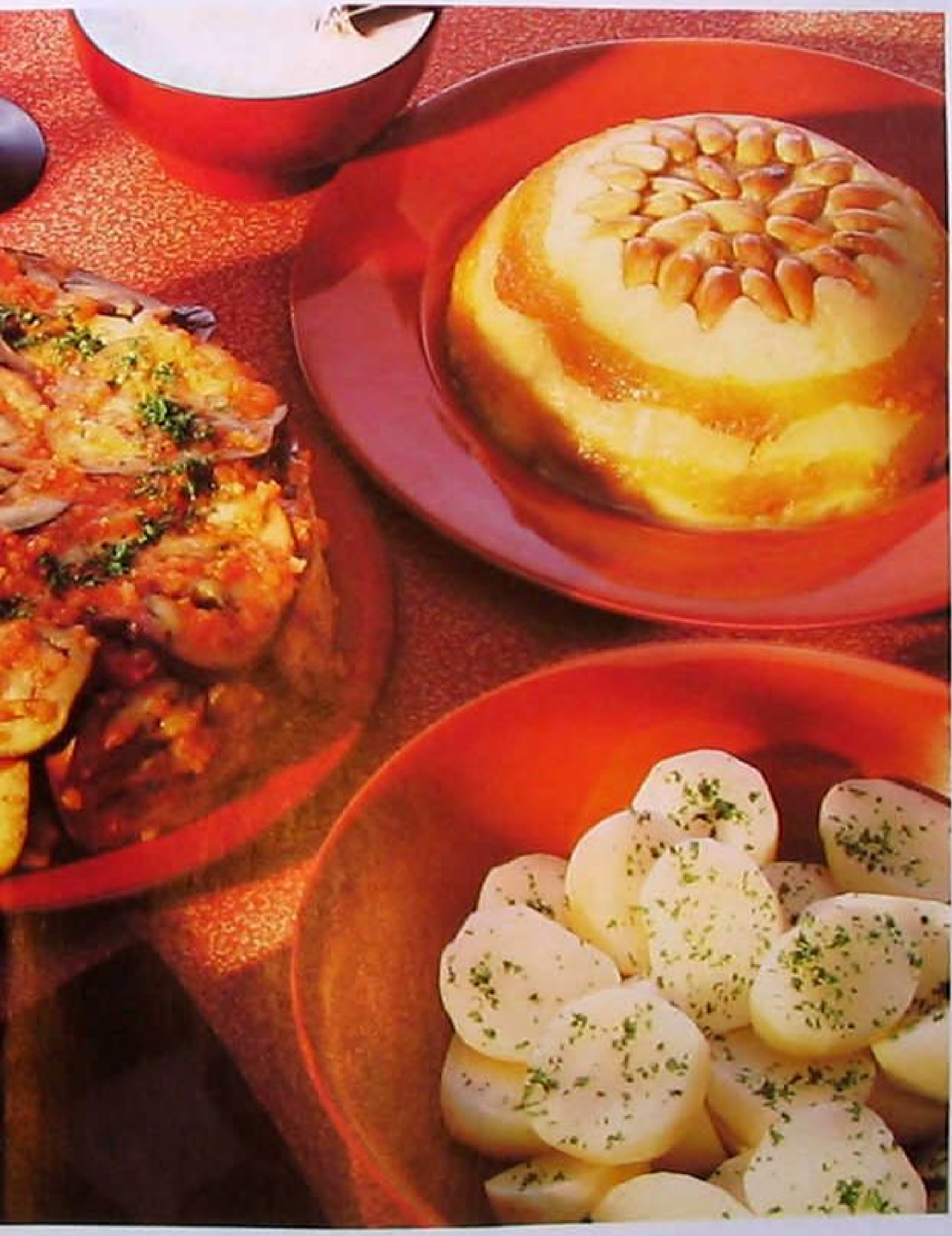
Aubergine Bake
Fresh vegetables, cheese and pasta
in an aubergine case

Glazed Turnips
Whole baby turnips served in a buttery glaze

French Beans
Crisp green beans

Apricot Almond Pudding
Chilled layers of custard, fruit
and almond biscuits

SERVES 4



Mushroom pâté

13 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, chopped
150g / 5oz cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
salt and pepper
sliced mushrooms, to garnish
few sprigs of parsley

SERVES 4

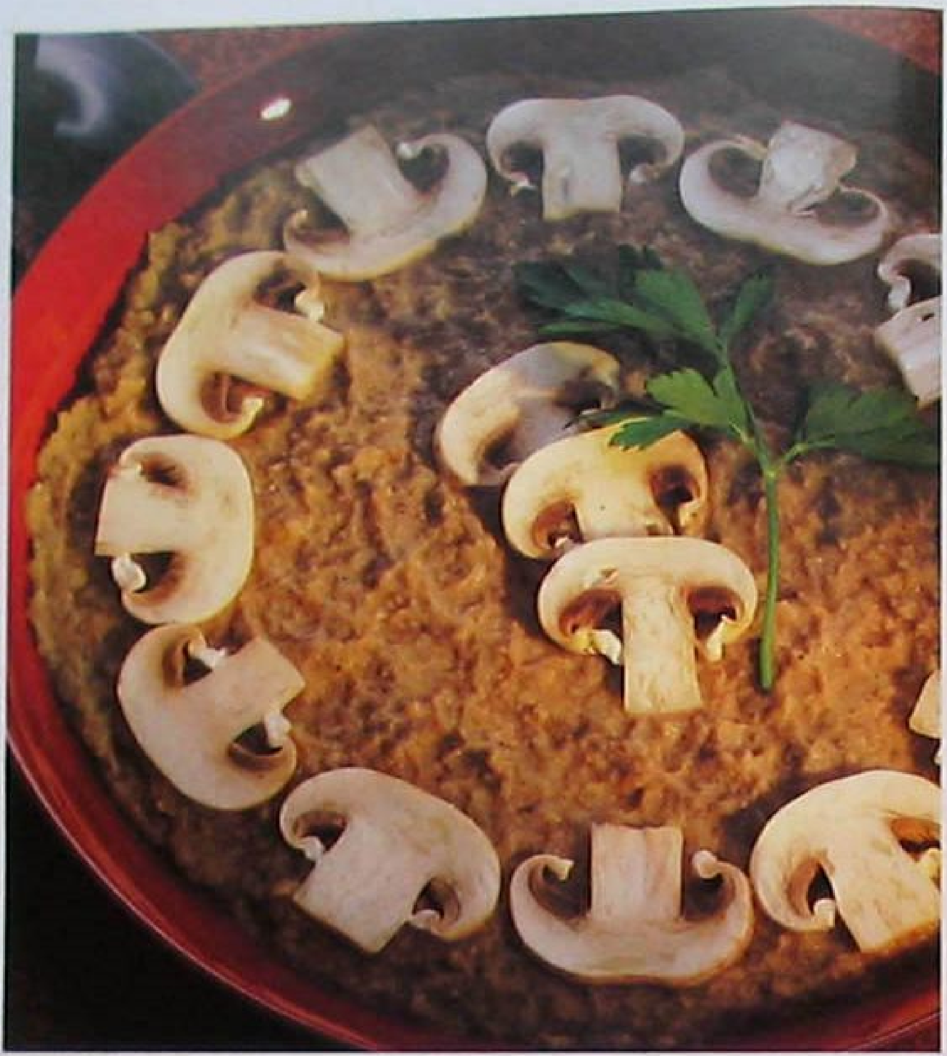
1 Place the onion and olive oil in a medium-sized dish. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5 minutes until onion is transparent.

2 Add the mushrooms and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for a further 5 minutes.

3 Stir in the beans and lemon juice and microwave covered at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Allow to cool slightly.

4 Purée in a blender and add salt and pepper to taste. Turn into a

serving dish and leave, covered, in the refrigerator, to chill thoroughly.
5 Stir gently, then garnish with sliced mushrooms and parsley. Serve with crisp wholemeal rolls.



PAUL WEBSTER

Mushroom Pâté

Aubergine bake

28 mins

Standing time: 13 mins

A vegetarian Cheddar cheese, made without rennet, is available from health food stores and some large supermarkets.

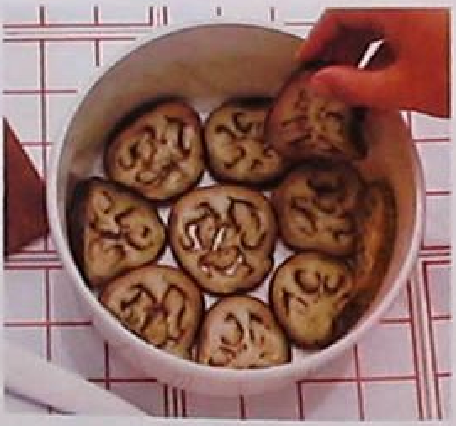
175g / 6oz wholemeal pasta shells or macaroni
salt and pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
700g / 1½lb aubergines
2 × 425g / 15oz cans tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms
2 courgettes, thinly sliced
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
finely chopped parsley (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Cook the pasta conventionally in boiling salted water until just tender — about 12-15 minutes. Drain and set aside, covered with cling film over the surface.
2 Mix the garlic, onion, carrot, celery and olive oil together in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until the vegetables are tender.
3 Prick the aubergines all over with a fork and cut off the stalks. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Set aside to stand for 5 minutes, then slice thinly in rounds.
4 Stir the tomatoes and oregano into the cooked vegetable mixture. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Purée in a blender. Reserve half the puréed sauce and season to taste.
5 Add the peppers, mushrooms and courgettes to the remaining sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender. Allow to stand for 3 minutes.
6 Lightly grease a 2.3L / 4pt dish and line with aubergine slices (see right), reserving enough to make a 'lid'.
7 Stir the cheese and cooked pasta into the vegetable mixture. Season to taste and spread evenly in the lined dish. Cover with the remaining aubergine slices. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes, then invert on to a serving dish.
8 Reheat the reserved sauce at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, if necessary. Spread some of the sauce over the aubergine bake. Garnish with a border of parsley. Serve remaining sauce separately.

VARIATION
Use any selection of cooked vegetables for the filling, such as broccoli, carrots or corn.

How to line a dish with aubergines



RAY DUNS

Arrange *a ring of overlapping slices of aubergines in the base, so that the slices just turn up the sides of the dish. Fill the centre of the ring with more slices. Line the sides of the dish with more rounds, so that the bottom of each one rests over those in the base. Add spoonfuls of the pasta filling in a ring around the edge of the base to keep the slices upright as you work.*

Glazed turnips

12½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb baby turnips
125ml / 4fl oz water
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tsp caster sugar
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg

SERVES 4

1 Place the turnips in a shallow dish and add the water and lemon juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes (small tender turnips should only take 10 minutes). Stir several times during cooking.
2 Drain the turnips and set aside. Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, until melted and hot. Stir in the sugar, seasoning and nutmeg. Spoon over the turnips to coat.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Arrange with the beans around the Aubergine Bake.

French beans

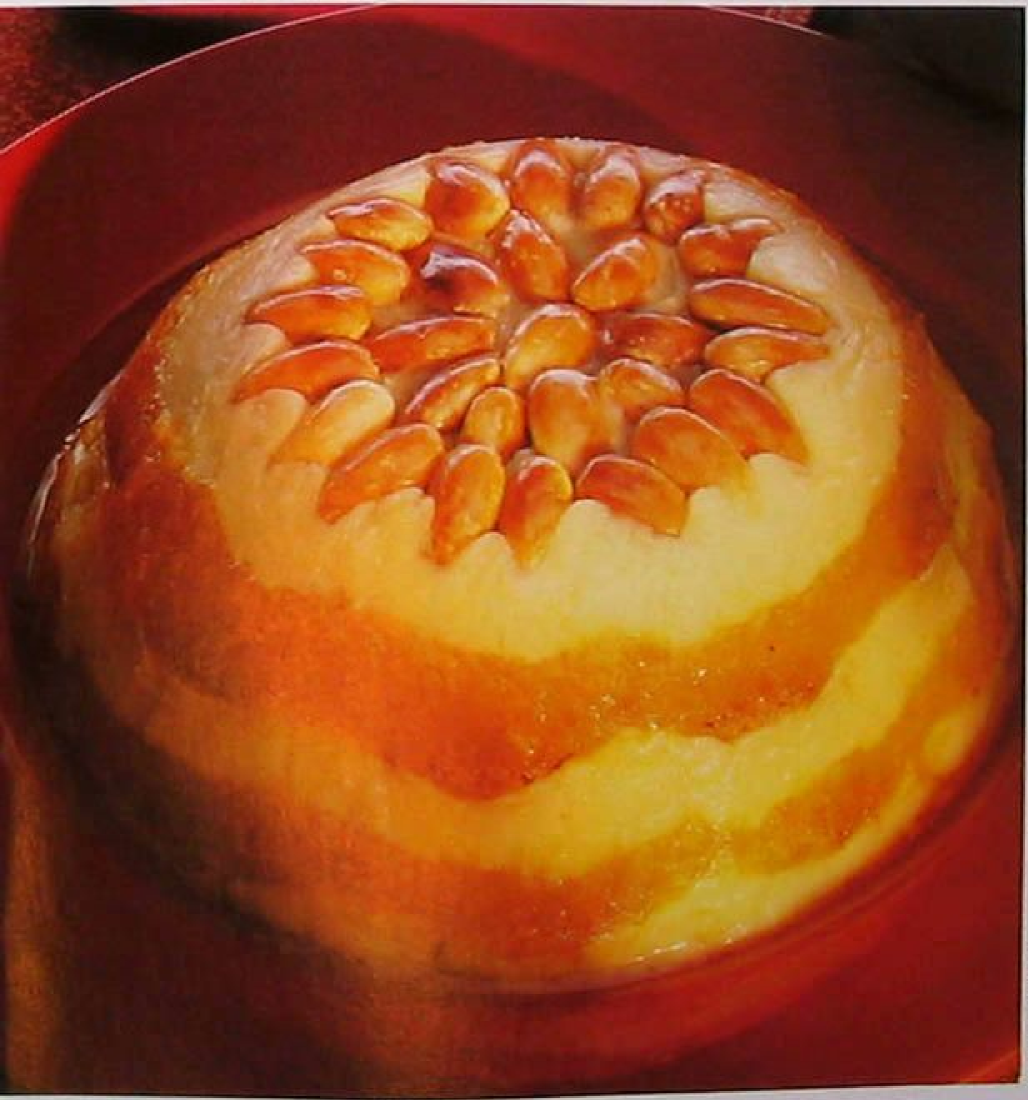
12 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb thin French beans, trimmed
60ml / 4tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Place the beans in a large casserole with the water.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes. Stir five times during cooking.
3 Drain and arrange around the Aubergine Bake with the turnips.



PAUL WEBSTER

Apricot almond pudding

12 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz dried apricots
275ml / ½pt orange juice
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
30-45ml / 2-3tbls plain flour
3 eggs
45ml / 3tbls sugar
grated zest of 1 orange
275ml / ½pt milk
30-45ml / 2-3tbls orange liqueur (optional)
50g / 2oz blanched almonds, toasted, to decorate
100g / 4oz small almond macaroons

SERVES 4

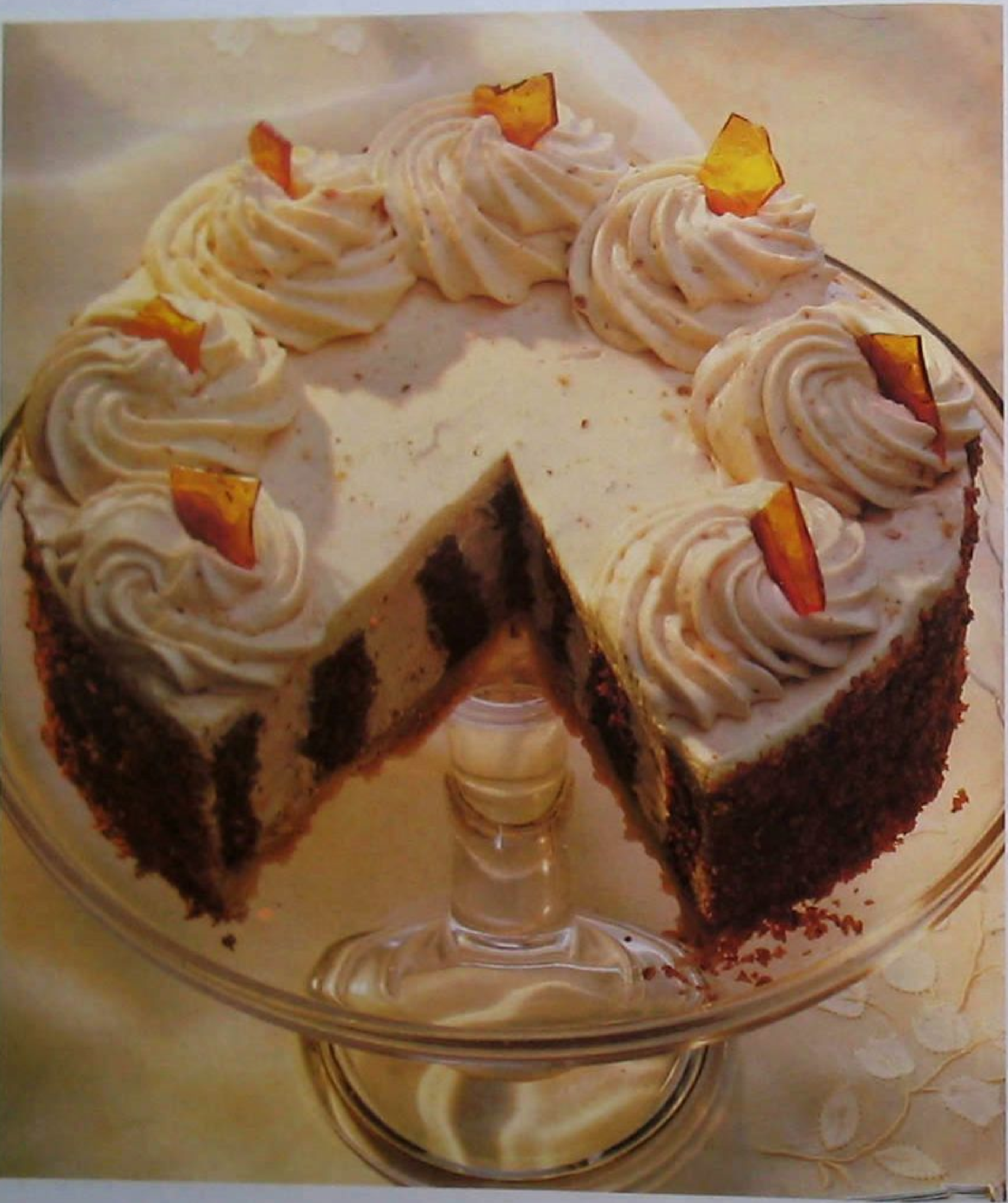
1 Soak the apricots for 6 hours in the orange and lemon juices.
2 Microwave the apricots in the soaking liquid, covered, at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, stirring twice. Leave to cool. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, eggs, sugar, orange zest and milk, until smooth. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring after 1 minute, then whisking every 30 seconds, until smooth and thick.
3 Stir liqueur into the apricot mixture and purée in a blender.
4 Line the base and sides of a 1.1L / 2pt bowl with cling film, making sure that there are no air pockets. Arrange a ring of toasted almonds over the base.
5 Add a quarter of the custard, spreading it carefully over the almonds. Add a layer of apricot purée (about one-third of the quantity). Add a layer of macaroons, pressed into the purée, close together.
6 Continue in layers, adding three more custard layers, interspersed with two each of apricots and macaroons. Chill for about six hours or overnight.
7 Turn the dessert out on to a serving dish and peel off the cling film. Smooth the sides and return to the refrigerator. Remove from refrigerator about 5 minutes before serving.

Apricot and Almond Pudding

STAR RECIPE

Surprise praline gateau

For a special party this gateau of chocolate cake and praline cream on a buttery shortbread base is sure to impress. The surprise stays hidden until you cut the cake — then all is revealed with each sumptuous slice!



PAUL WEBSTER

An almond shortbread and ever-popular chocolate cake cleverly combine to form the base for this delicious gateau — and both are simply and quickly cooked in the microwave. Filled and decorated with praline cream and caramel chips, it makes an eye-catching, special occasion gateau.

If you do not have a suitable rectangular dish for cooking the all-in-one chocolate cake, then a shoe box lid makes an ideal container, provided it does not contain any metal staples or clips. If so, these should be removed and the lid held in position with adhesive tape.

The dish (or box) should be lined with cling film for quick and easy removal of the cake once cooked. While still hot — and working quickly — the cake is cut lengthways into four strips and rolled up, Swiss roll fashion. It is then left to cool, held in place with cling film. Once cold, the spiral is unwound to form a loose roll on the shortbread base. The space between is filled with luscious praline cream to give the stripy 'surprise' slices when the cake is cut. See how to achieve this impressive effect by following the steps on page 788. It is essential to work quickly with the strips of hot cake as these become difficult to roll successfully on cooling.

Many of the stages of making this gateau can be prepared in advance to save time on the day. The shortbread can be made up to two weeks ahead and stored in an airtight tin or frozen.

The cake can be made to the coiled stage and left overnight, wrapped in cling film. Even the Caramel and Praline can be prepared and stored in an airtight tin for several weeks until required without becoming sticky.

Freezer notes

The shortbread base can be made in advance and frozen, if liked, for up to 6 months. Thaw at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-3 minutes. Handle base carefully; it is fragile.

Surprise praline gateau

18¼ mins

Standing time: none

SHORTBREAD BASE
75g / 3oz butter, diced
150g / 5oz plain flour
75g / 3oz caster sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp almond essence

CAKE
75g / 3oz butter or margarine, softened
50g / 2oz self-raising flour, sifted
60ml / 4tbls cocoa, sifted
75g / 3oz caster sugar
2 eggs

FILLING AND DECORATION
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
60ml / 4tbls water
30ml / 2tbls icing sugar
575ml / 1pt double cream
1 quantity Praline (see recipe right)
50g / 2oz plain chocolate, broken into pieces
1 quantity Caramel (see recipe below)

SERVES 10-12

Caramel

3½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz granulated sugar
30ml / 2tbls water

MAKES ABOUT 50g / 2oz

1 Put sugar and water in a 1L / 1¾pt heatproof glass bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stirring once to dissolve the sugar.

2 Continue microwaving at 100% (High) for a further 2½-3 minutes until the mixture turns a rich golden brown. Take care not to overcook at this stage.

3 Pour mixture immediately on to an oiled baking sheet, tilting it to coat thinly and evenly. Leave until cold, then break caramel into pieces and use as required. (Caramel pieces can be stored in an airtight container for several weeks.)

Praline

Praline is a flavouring, or decoration, made by cooking unblanched almonds and granulated sugar together. This recipe should be cooked in the conventional way only and **not** in the microwave cooker.

100g / 3½oz sugar
100g / 3½oz unblanched almonds

MAKES ABOUT 225g / 7oz

1 Put the sugar and almonds in a heavy-based saucepan and place over a low heat. Cook gently until the sugar caramelizes and turns a rich golden brown, shaking the pan frequently to ensure that the mixture browns evenly.

2 Pour the mixture immediately on to an oiled baking sheet and leave until cold.

3 Finely crush the praline between greaseproof paper with a rolling pin, or break it into pieces and put into a food processor or strong blender and process until finely crushed. (Praline, whether broken into pieces or finely crushed, can be stored successfully for several weeks in an airtight tin.)

Microtips

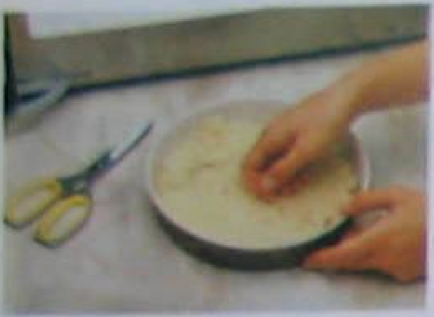
When making the caramel in the microwave, always wear an oven glove to protect your hand when removing the bowl from the cooker, as it will be very hot. Fill the emptied bowl with hot (not cold) water to prevent it cracking and to make the bowl easier to wash up. (Cold water hardens the caramel.)

Cook's notes

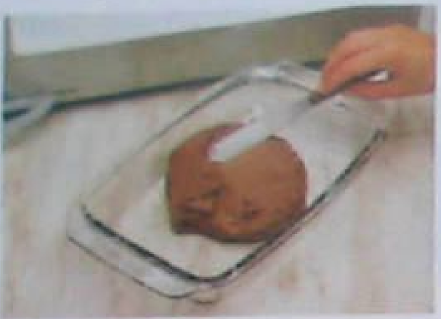
Organize all your equipment and ingredients before you start to mix the cake. This is one of the keys to successful cake-making.

If liked, moisten the cold coiled cake with a little liqueur, rum or fresh squeezed orange juice before filling and decorating with Praline cream. This makes it moister to eat.

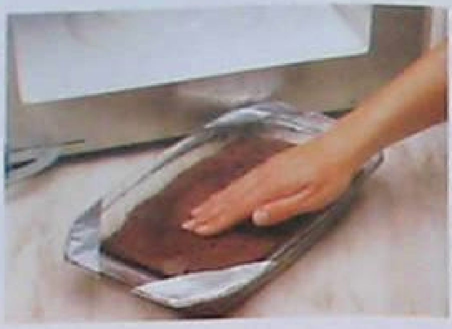
How to microwave Surprise praline gateau



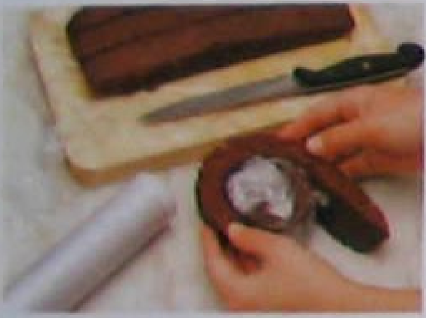
Make *shortbread: rub butter, flour and sugar together until crumbly; add essence. Knead to form a smooth dough. Press on to base of a shallow 20cm / 8in round dish, lined with greaseproof paper. Stand on an upturned plate. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 12 minutes; rotate twice.*



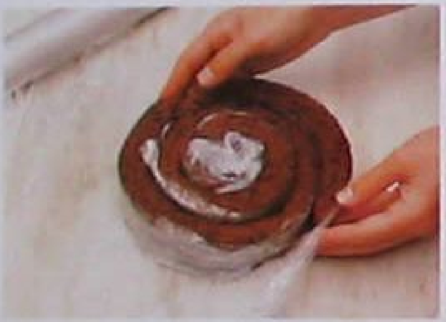
Leave *to cool in dish. Make cake: put butter, flour and cocoa, sugar and eggs into a bowl; beat well for 1 minute using an electric mixer or for 2 minutes by hand, using a wooden spoon, until mixture is light and fluffy. Spread evenly in a shallow 18 × 28cm / 7 × 11in dish lined with cling film.*



Stand *dish on an upturned plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until edges of cake are set. Cover corners of dish with small pieces of smooth, well secured foil. (Make sure foil does not touch sides of cooker.) Rotate dish; cook for 1½-2 minutes until top of cake is firm to the touch.*

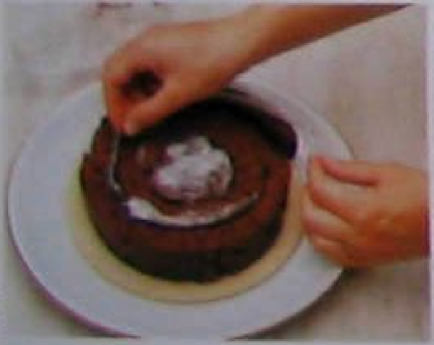


Using *the cling film, lift cake out of dish while still hot. Working quickly, cut cake lengthways into five equal strips. Roll up one of the hot strips of cake, like a Swiss roll, using a treble thickness strip of cling film to hold it in place. Stand roll upright to form the central core.*



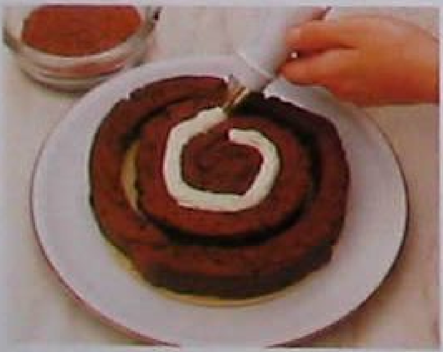
Quickly *wrap the other strips of hot cake, one at a time, around the central core to form a coil shape. Secure in place each time with treble thickness strips of cling film. Leave until the cake is cold and set in shape.*
(The strips of cake must be shaped while still hot or they will crack).

Sprinkle *gelatine over 30ml / 2tbls of water in a bowl; leave for 3 minutes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until dissolved; stir once. Cool slightly; stir in remaining water and icing sugar. Whip cream with gelatine mixture until thick; fold in half the crushed Praline.*

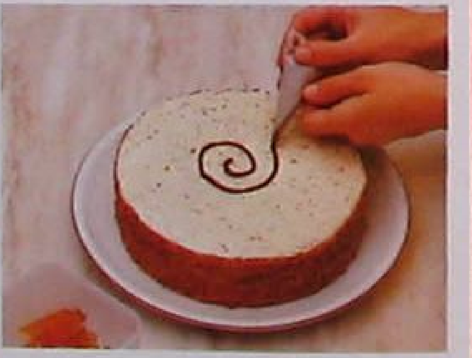


RAY DUNS

Remove *shortbread from dish and discard the greaseproof paper. Place shortbread on a flat serving plate. Rearrange cake strips in evenly spaced circles on shortbread. Start with outermost strip, placing it on the edge of shortbread, and remove the cling film from each strip as you work.*



Put *a quarter of the Praline cream in a piping bag fitted with a 12mm / ½in plain nozzle. Pipe between cake to fill gaps. Reserve a quarter of the remaining Praline cream; spread the rest over top and sides of the cake to cover completely. Coat sides with remaining crushed Praline.*



Put *chocolate in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes; stir twice. Pipe or spoon chocolate on top of the cake. Put reserved Praline cream in a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle. Pipe rosettes around top edge of cake; decorate with caramel chips. Chill before serving.*

Two~way pasta dishes

Even with the microwave substantial layered pasta dishes, such as lasagne, are time-consuming to prepare. A clever cook makes double the quantity, serves half hot and freezes the rest.

Pasta dishes are popular, filling and relatively inexpensive — but they do take time to prepare and cook. Instead of spending time making up enough for just one dish, cook double the quantities, serve half immediately and freeze the rest. The microwave not only speeds up the initial preparation, but also allows you to reheat the assembled pasta relatively quickly or thaw it straight from frozen, giving perfect, moist results every time.

Cooking pasta in the microwave (see chart, page 307) takes the same time as cooking it conventionally, but saves on energy. If making up pasta dishes, it is best to cook the pasta conventionally while preparing the sauce in the microwave.

When assembling a pasta dish, start with a thin layer of sauce in the base of the dish — this helps prevent the pasta sticking underneath. Also make sure that the top layer of pasta is well covered with sauce to keep it moist when microwaved.

Microwave-to-table dishes are best for the pasta dishes you intend to serve straight away after assembling and heating.

Fish Pasta Medley

RAY DUNS

Remember to use a microwave/freezer dish for the pasta to be frozen. Always cool the assembled dish completely before wrapping and freezing. Dishes that are well flavoured with herbs are best not frozen for too long as their flavour deteriorates.

As pasta dishes benefit from longer, slower cooking, a 50% (Medium) power setting is more suitable for thawing and reheating than 100% (High). Test whether the pasta is hot by taking a small portion from the centre. If it is a lasagne dish, pierce the centre with a knife to check it is hot right through. Then, to give the dish a crisp finish, brown quickly under the grill.

Cook's notes

The time boxes for each recipe include the microwave time taken to assemble both dishes — for freezing and for serving immediately. This does not include cooking pasta in the microwave. As standing time is the same for a dish that is heated after assembling and one that is thawed and reheated from frozen, the standing time given refers to either. The thawing and reheating time given covers microwaving time for a dish from the freezer. Remember to allow for the standing time before serving the dish.

Fish pasta medley

26½ mins

Standing time: 8-10 mins

Thawing and heating time: 35 mins

450g / 1lb green and white pasta shells, cooked and drained
1 large onion, chopped
2 large sweet peppers, seeded and chopped
150g / 5oz mushrooms, sliced
800-900g / 1¾-2lb white fish fillets, skinned and cut in 12mm / ½in cubes
225ml / 8fl oz dry white wine
2 bay leaves
2 parsley sprigs
salt and pepper

SAUCE
75g / 3oz butter
75g / 3oz plain flour
about 225ml / 8fl oz milk
about 225ml / 8fl oz single cream

TOPPING
150g / 5oz grated Cheddar cheese
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
50g / 2oz flaked almonds, toasted

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 Place the onion, peppers and mushrooms in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until just softened, stirring once; drain well. Add fish, wine, bay leaves and parsley. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until tender, stirring twice.

2 Strain the liquid into a large measure and make up to 850ml / 1½pt with equal amounts of milk and cream.

3 For the sauce, place butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until melted. Stir in flour and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until bubbling. Gradually whisk in cream mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, whisking two or three times until thickened. Season.

4 Discard bay leaves and parsley from fish, then stir fish into half the sauce. Assemble pasta and sauce in two dishes (see step 1, below). Freeze one dish (see step 2, below).

5 Microwave remaining dish at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes until heated through, turning twice. Stand for 8-10 minutes.

6 To thaw and serve frozen dish see step 3, below.

Cook's notes

When using cottage cheese in any of the recipes, it is best to drain off excess liquid so that the cheese is not watery. Ricotta cheese can be used as a richer substitute for the cottage cheese. Gruyère cheese makes a tasty alternative to Mozzarella.

How to assemble, freeze and serve Fish pasta medley

RAY DUNN

To assemble, *make alternate layers of fish sauce and pasta shells in two dishes, finishing with pasta. Cover with remaining plain sauce. Sprinkle with cheese, parsley and almonds.*

To freeze, *cool the pasta dish, then chill in refrigerator. Wrap tightly in freezer wrap or foil. Place in plastic bag and seal. Label and freeze no longer than two months.*

To serve *frozen Fish pasta medley, unwrap, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 35-40 minutes until heated through, turning dish several times. Let stand for 8-10 minutes.*

Saucy cannelloni

28 mins

Standing time: 5-8 mins

Thawing and heating time: 25 mins

16 cannelloni, cooked and drained

FILLING
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
225g / 8oz frozen spinach, thawed and drained
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
3 eggs, lightly beaten
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper

SAUCE
2 × 425g / 15oz Italian tomato sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil

TOPPING
225g / 8oz cottage or curd cheese
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 For the filling, microwave beef and onion in a large bowl at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring three times; drain. Add remaining filling ingredients.

2 For the sauce, mix the tomato sauce with the herbs in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once.

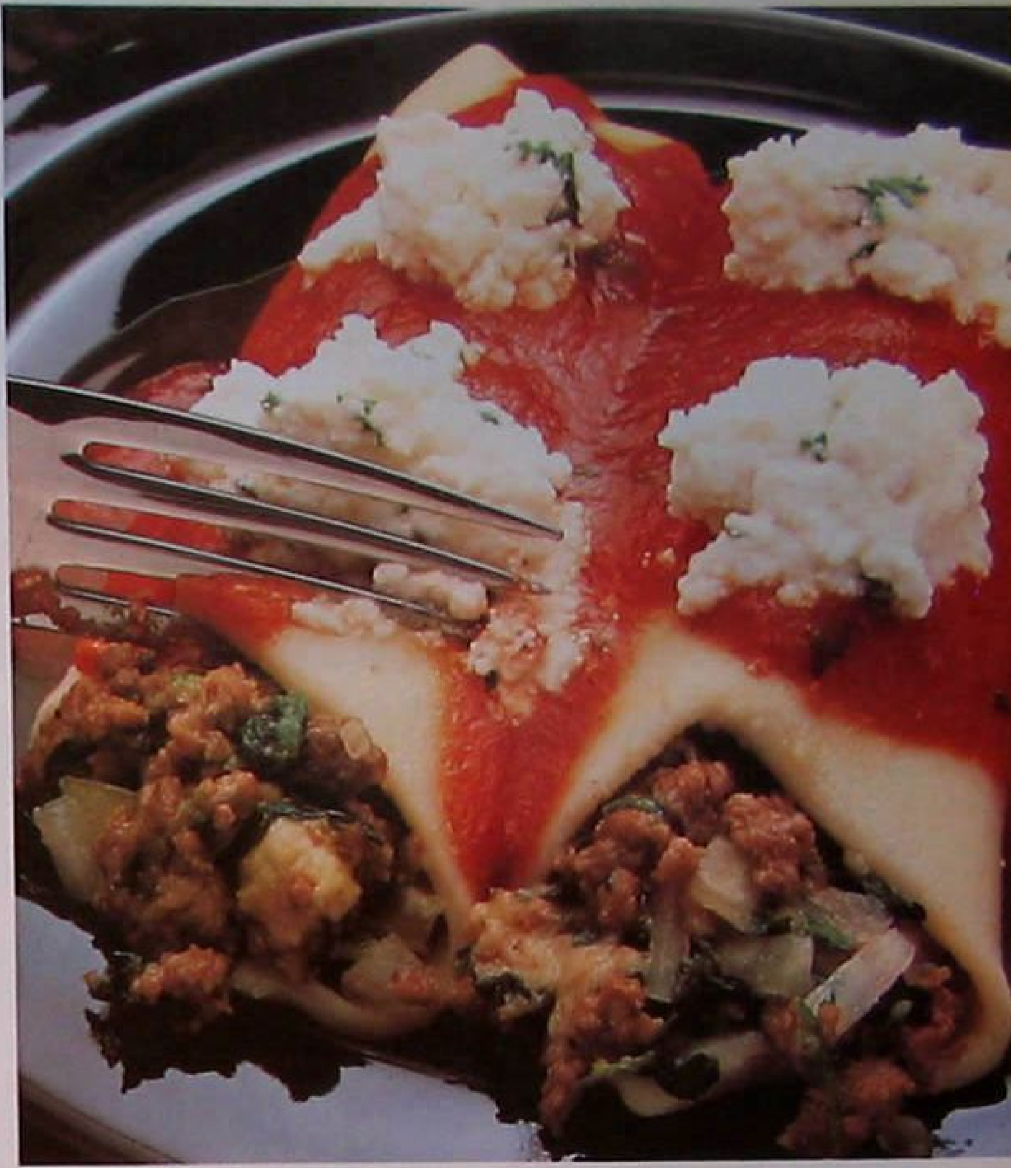
3 Fill and assemble the cannelloni in two dishes (see step, right). Microwave each dish at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, turning twice. Cool one. Beat together topping ingredients.

4 Spoon half the topping over the other dish and microwave, covered, for a further 8-10 minutes; turn twice. Stand 5-8 minutes, then serve.

5 Spoon rest of topping on to cooled dish. Freeze up to six weeks.

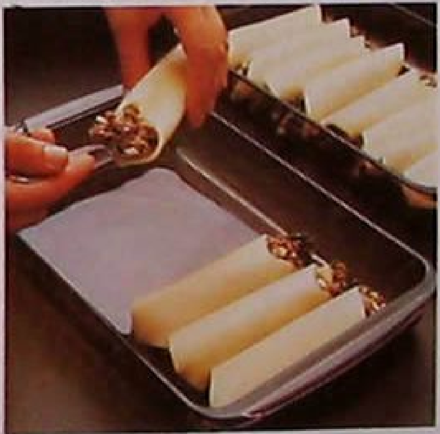
TO SERVE

Unwrap the frozen Saucy cannelloni, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes; turn several times. Stand 5-8 minutes.



Saucy Cannelloni

How to assemble Saucy cannelloni



Fill *the cannelloni with the meat mixture using a teaspoon. Arrange the filled tubes in two rectangular baking trays, leaving very little space between each. Pour half the sauce over each dish.*

Cook's notes

Some types of cannelloni can be used without pre-cooking, if well covered with sauce; increase the quantity of sauce by about a quarter to be sure. Microwave for the same time. To make it easier to fill the cannelloni it is best to soften the pasta first. Pour boiling water over to cover generously, leave for 5 minutes then drain.

Some types of lasagne do not need pre-cooking — simply layer it with the prepared sauce and filling. Again, add an extra quarter the quantity of sauce given in the recipe, but microwave for the same amount of time.

Spicy Sausage Pasta

Spicy sausage pasta

20 mins

Standing time: 8-10 mins

Thawing and heating time: 30 mins

450g / 1lb pasta quills or shells, cooked and drained
450g / 1lb cooked spicy sausage, chopped
225g / 8oz onion, chopped
2-4 garlic cloves, crushed
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
800g / 28oz can tomatoes
90ml / 6tbls tomato purée or paste
100g / 4oz black olives, stoned and chopped
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 Put sausage, onion and garlic into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes until onion is tender, stirring three times. Drain.

2 Stir in the mushrooms, tomatoes, tomato paste, olives, basil, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring three times. Stir in pasta.

3 Spoon half the pasta mixture into a serving dish and mix in 75g / 3oz Mozzarella. Sprinkle over 25g / 1oz Mozzarella and 22.5ml / 1½tbls Parmesan. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-7 minutes until hot. Turn several times. Stand 8-10 minutes; serve.

4 When the remaining pasta is cold, stir in 75g / 3oz Mozzarella. Spoon into a dish and chill. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Wrap, label and freeze up to 6 weeks.

TO SERVE

Unwrap the frozen Spicy sausage pasta and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-40 minutes; stir several times. Stand 8-10 minutes.

Cottage cannelloni

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and heating time: 25 mins

16 cannelloni, cooked and drained

FILLING

700g / 1½lb cottage or curd cheese
225g / 8oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
100g / 4oz grated Parmesan cheese
4 small eggs, lightly beaten
4 garlic cloves, crushed
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
salt and pepper

SAUCE

22.5ml / 4½tsp cornflour
575ml / 1pt tomato juice
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
15ml / 1tbls red wine
75ml / 5tbls milk

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 For the filling, mix together cheeses, eggs, garlic, basil, salt and pepper. Fill cannelloni.

2 Divide cannelloni between two dishes. Cover and chill one.

3 Blend the cornflour with a little of the tomato juice. Whisk in remaining juice, sugar, basil, oil and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, whisking three or four times until thick. Mix in wine and milk.

4 Pour half sauce over uncovered cannelloni. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-8 minutes, until hot, turning several times. Stand 5 minutes, then serve.

5 Chill rest of sauce, pour over chilled cannelloni. Wrap, label and freeze up to six weeks.

TO SERVE

Unwrap frozen Cottage cannelloni, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes until hot, turning dish several times. Stand for 5 minutes.

Beefy lasagne layer

60 mins

Standing time: 8-10 mins

Thawing and heating time: 30 mins

225g / 8oz lasagne
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
397g / 14oz can tomatoes
425g / 15oz Italian tomato sauce
225g / 8oz cauliflower florets
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
5ml / 1tsp sugar
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb cottage or curd cheese
2 eggs, lightly beaten
75g / 3oz grated Parmesan cheese
225g / 8oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 Cook lasagne as steps below, or boil conventionally.

2 Microwave mince, onion and garlic in a large bowl at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring three times. Drain off fat.

3 Stir in the tomatoes, sauce, cauliflower, half the parsley, the herbs and sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce to 50% (Medium) for 30-35 minutes, stirring two or three times. Season.

4 Mix the cottage or curd cheese, eggs, 40g / 1½oz Parmesan, remaining parsley and season.

5 Assemble lasagne in two dishes, layering meat, pasta, cheese mixture, Mozzarella and rest of Parmesan.

6 Cover one dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes; turn two or three times. Stand 8-10 minutes, then serve.

7 Cool, then chill other dish. Wrap, label, freeze up to 2 months.

TO SERVE

Unwrap the dish. Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 30-40 minutes until hot, turning the dish several times. Stand for 8-10 minutes, then serve with a tossed green salad.

Beefy Lasagne Layer

How to microwave lasagne

Place *the lasagne in a rectangular dish with 700ml / 1¼pt boiling salted water. Cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes until the pasta is just tender, rearranging the pieces once.*

Drain *the pasta in a colander and rinse under cold running water to remove any starch. Spread the sheets out, side by side, on a layer of cling film. Cover and set aside while preparing the filling.*

Vegetable lasagne

58 mins

Standing time: 8-10 mins

Thawing and heating time: 30 mins

450g / 1lb cottage or curd cheese
2 eggs, lightly beaten
75g / 3oz grated Parmesan cheese
225g / 8oz lasagne, cooked and drained
375g / 12oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

SAUCE
225g / 8oz mushrooms, chopped
1 large green pepper, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
397g / 14oz can tomatoes
284g / 10oz jar tomato paste
150ml / ¼pt red wine
20ml / 4tsp chopped parsley
10ml / 2tsp dried oregano
2 bay leaves
salt and pepper

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

How to microwave, freeze and serve Vegetable lasagne

Combine *mushrooms, green pepper, onion, garlic and oil in a large bowl. Cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until tender, stir twice.*

Stir *in the tomatoes, tomato paste, red wine, parsley, oregano, bay leaves, salt and pepper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.*

Reduce *to 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes, stirring several times. Discard bay leaves. Mix cottage cheese with eggs and half the Parmesan cheese.*

Layer *tomato sauce, lasagne, cottage cheese mixture and Mozzarella in two baking dishes, finishing with sauce. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan. Microwave one dish at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes until hot and bubbling, turning two or three times. Stand 8-10 minutes, then serve.*

Freeze *other dish for two months. Unwrap and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-40 minutes, turning several times. Stand 8-10 minutes.*

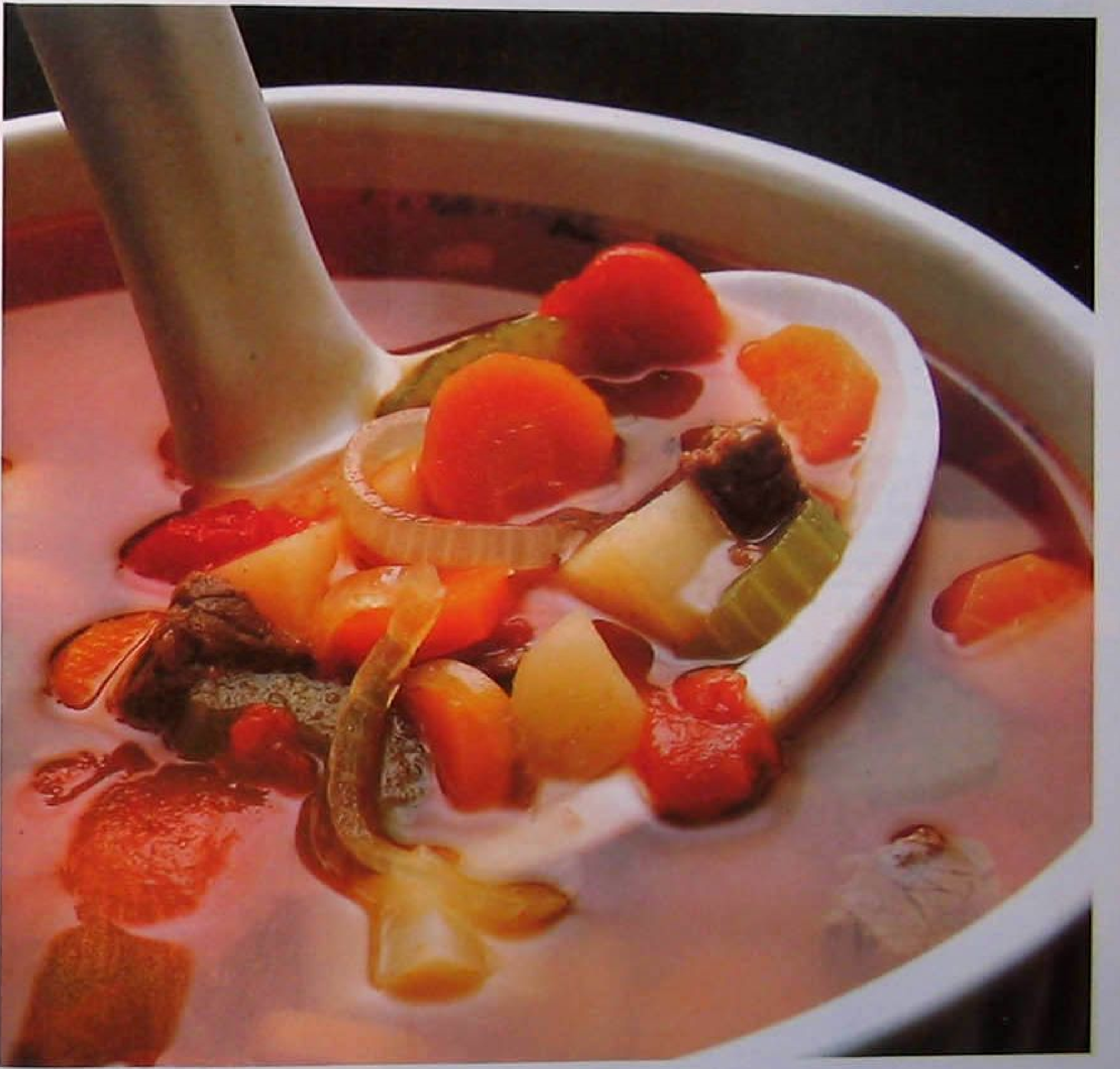
Substantial soups

Soups with a difference — so substantial they could be eaten with a knife and fork instead of a spoon! Packed with chunks of meat and vegetables they are hearty enough to satisfy the keenest appetites.

Combine meat or fish with plenty of vegetables and a starchy filler such as potatoes, pasta, grains or pulses to make warming family suppers — in under half an hour. Serve with chunks of fresh bread, crusty rolls or buttered toast and finish with fruit, or another light dessert, for a well-balanced meal.

The soups here are quickly cooked in the microwave. As an added bonus, many use leftover meat or poultry or handy convenience foods. Chicken Noodle Soup (recipe page 798) combines cubed chicken meat with frozen vegetables, while Country Beef Soup (recipe page 797) uses pearl barley and everyday vegetables to help stretch the leftovers from the roast joint.

Chunky Beef 'n' Vegetable Soup



Chunky beef 'n' vegetable soup

17 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

2 carrots, thinly sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 onion, sliced
175-225g / 6-8oz potatoes, diced
1½ beef stock cubes
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried mixed herbs
700ml / 1¼pt hot water
10ml / 2tsp gravy powder
213g / 7½oz can tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
175-225g / 6-8oz cooked beef, cut in 12mm / ½in cubes

SERVES 4

1 Put carrots, celery, onion, potatoes, stock cubes, herbs and 150ml / ¼pt hot water into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-12 minutes, until the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
2 Blend the gravy powder with the tomatoes, stir into the vegetables with the remaining hot water, sugar and cooked beef. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until heated through. Leave to stand for 3-4 minutes.

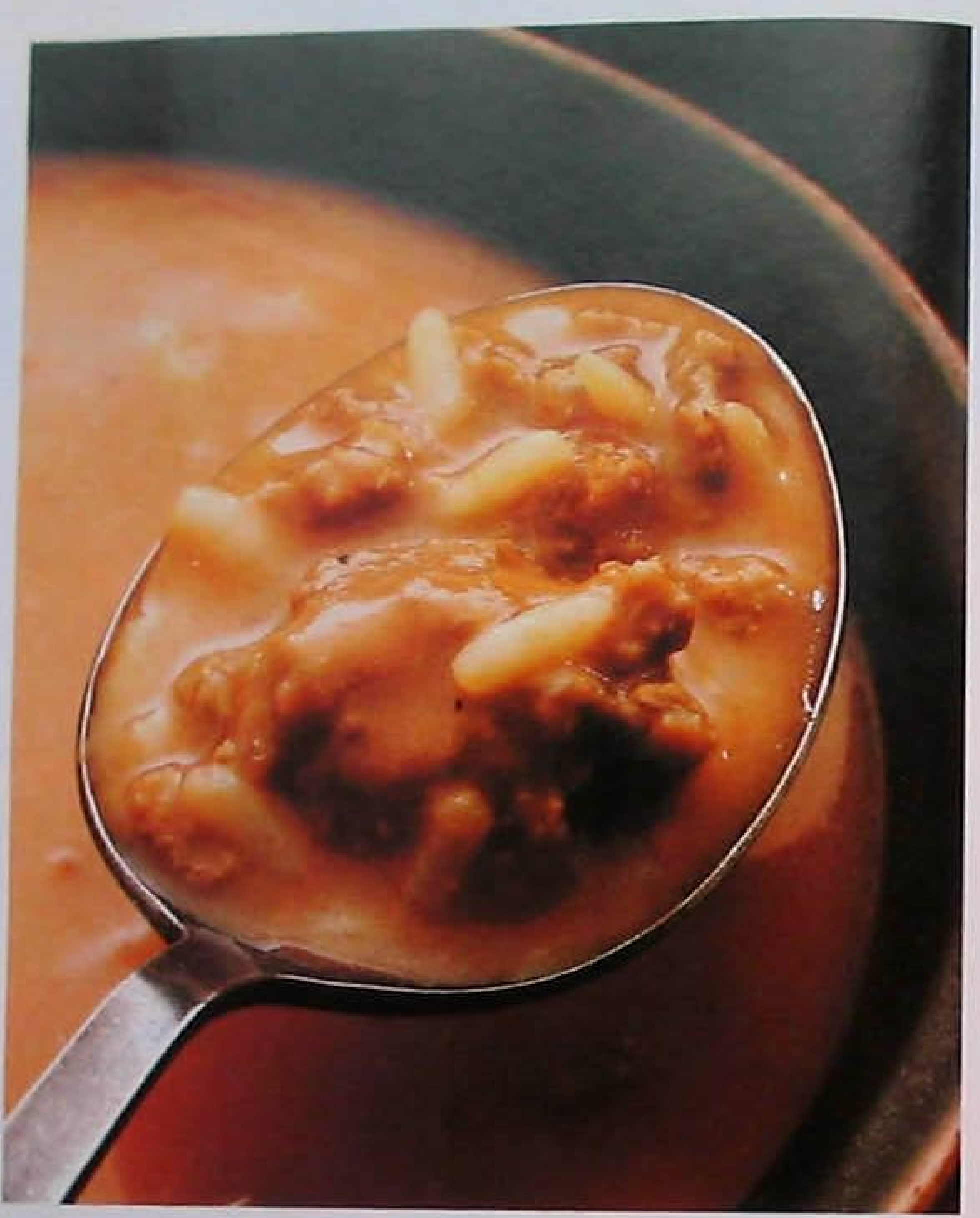
Chunky beef 'n' vegetable soup for two: halve the ingredients, but use 275ml / ½pt water. Microwave the vegetables with 90ml / 6tbls of the water at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring once. Add remaining ingredients and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

Cook's notes

You can use leftover beef from a casserole, if liked — in which case add any leftover gravy and vegetables as well.

Make sure to cook raw vegetables until they are really tender as this gives the soup a good, rich 'cooked-in' flavour.

Vary the vegetables if liked, using those in season — leeks and small white turnips are especially tasty in soups.



Beefy Tomato Soup

Beefy tomato soup

10 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz lean minced beef
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt tomato juice
227g / 8oz can ready cooked rice
10ml / 2tsp sugar
1 bay leaf
1.5ml / ¼tsp onion salt
275ml / ½pt milk
pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Crumble the mince into a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until no longer pink. Drain off any fat.
2 Stir in the flour, then the tomato juice. Add the rice, sugar, bay leaf and onion salt. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until the rice is tender, stirring once.
3 Gradually stir in the milk, then season to taste with pepper. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the soup is heated through. Discard the bay leaf.

VARIATIONS

Use 'easy cook' rice instead of the canned rice. Add 50g / 2oz 'easy cook' rice with the tomato juice and microwave for 14-16 minutes at 100% (High), until tender. Increase the quantity of milk to 425ml / ¾pt.

Add 100-175g / 4-6oz frozen peas with the rice and tomato juice.

Country Beef Soup

Country beef soup

26 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This is a sustaining and nutritious soup.

2 carrots, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls pearl barley
10ml / 4tsp chopped parsley
1 bay leaf
1½ beef stock cubes
575ml / 1pt hot water
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
30ml / 2tbls cold water
350-450g / ¾-1lb cooked beef, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the carrots, onion, barley, parsley, bay leaf, stock cubes and 150ml / ¼pt hot water into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring once.

2 Blend the flour with the cold water, then stir into the vegetables with the remaining hot water and beef. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.

3 Stir, then continue to microwave for 18-20 minutes until the barley is tender, stirring once. Season to taste, then leave to stand for 5 minutes. Discard the bay leaf.

VARIATION
Cooked, leftover chicken or ham, cut into small cubes may be added to the soup instead of beef if preferred. If adding chicken or ham, use chicken stock cubes.

Creamy potato soup

20 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

For extra fibre and nourishment, do not peel the potatoes.

450-575g / 1-1¼lb potatoes, diced
2 large celery stalks, sliced
1 onion, chopped
90ml / 6tbls water
½ vegetable stock cube
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt milk
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the potatoes, celery, onion, water and stock cube into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, until vegetables are tender, stirring twice.

2 In a separate bowl, blend the flour with 150ml / ¼pt of the milk until smooth. Stir into the potatoes with the remaining milk, the butter and pepper to taste.

3 Microwave, uncovered, for 10-12 minutes, stirring several times, until thick. Stand 3-4 minutes.

Creamy potato soup for two: microwave 125-175g / 4-6oz diced potato, 1 small celery stalk, sliced, 1 small onion, chopped, and quarter stock cube with 37.5ml / 2½tbls water for 5 minutes at 100% (High). Stir in 22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour blended with 225ml / 8fl oz milk, knob of butter or margarine and pepper to taste. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring twice, until hot and thickened. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

Creamy Potato Soup

Beany sausage soup

24 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

225g / 8oz lean minced beef
225g / 8oz pork sausagemeat
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
3 carrots, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
700ml / 1¼pt hot water
225g / 8oz frozen cut green beans
459g / 15½oz can white haricot or cannellini beans, drained
297g / 10oz can cream of celery soup
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

How to microwave Beany sausage soup

Crumble *minced beef and sausagemeat into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, until no longer pink. Drain on absorbent paper.*

Put *celery, carrots, onion and 275ml / ½pt of the hot water into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, until vegetables are tender; stir once.*

Stir *in remaining water, the green and haricot beans, soup, herbs and drained meat. Cover, microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, stirring once. Season. Stand for 3-4 minutes.*

Chicken noodle soup

12 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

225g / 8oz cooked chicken meat, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1L / 1¾pt hot water
1½ chicken stock cubes
50g / 2oz dried tagliatelle, broken up
227g / 8oz frozen mixed vegetables
large pinch dried marjoram
10ml / 2tsp chopped chives
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put all the ingredients except the seasoning into a large bowl. Stir thoroughly, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes until the tagliatelle is just tender.

2 Season to taste. Stand for 3-4 minutes, then serve.

Chicken noodle soup for two: halve all the ingredients and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes.

VARIATION

Use cooked, leftover vegetables instead of frozen. Add to the soup for the last 2 minutes just to heat through.

Quiches

The light, creamy texture of a good quiche requires slow, gentle cooking when tackled the conventional way. With clever, step-by-step assembly, microwaving offers a whole new approach to quiche-making.

Give the microwave treatment to your quiches. It saves time, cuts down on excess fat and gives perfect results every time.

There are generally four stages involved — microwaving the pastry case, cooking the solid filling, part-cooking the egg custard filling and microwaving the filled pastry case. This method makes for faster complete cooking. The solid filling, if it needs to be cooked at all, can be microwaved in a fraction of the conventional cooking time. For a step-by-step guide to quiche-making, see page 370.

Because egg custard mixtures are delicate, they need to be microwaved at 50% (Medium) power. This avoids overcooking and helps ensure that the filling does not become rubbery. Test for doneness by inserting a knife into the centre: the blade should come out clean. The quiche will complete cooking in its standing time.

An individual Prawn Quiche

RAY DUNS

Prawn quiches

21
mins

Standing time: 20 mins

PASTRY
225g / 8oz plain or wholemeal flour
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz lard or cooking margarine
45-60ml / 3-4tbls cold water

FILLING
175g / 6oz prawns, defrosted if frozen
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
75g / 3oz full-fat soft herb cheese
2 eggs, lightly beaten
150ml / ¼pt milk
45ml / 3tbls double cream
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Make the pastry according to the method on page 370, using the above ingredients. Divide the ball of dough into six pieces. Roll each piece out on a lightly floured surface to a circle 5cm / 2in larger than an 11.5cm / 4½in flan dish.
2 Grease six dishes lightly and line with the pastry. Chill for 10 minutes and crimp the edges. Prick the pastry cases and line them as directed on page 370. Microwave, three at a time, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Remove absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1½ minutes, or until the pastry is cooked. Repeat with the remaining cases. Toss the prawns in the lemon juice. Reserve six and divide the rest between the six cases.
4 Place the soft cheese in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl and gradually blend in the eggs. Add milk, cream, chives, parsley and seasoning. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes or until hot, stirring every 2 minutes.
5 Spoon half the mixture into three cases. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes, until set. Turn dishes after 3 minutes and add a prawn to each for decoration. Stand 10 minutes. Follow the same procedure with the remaining three quiches.

Broccoli quiche

13
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

270g / 10oz packet frozen broccoli spears
4 eggs, beaten
150ml / ¼pt milk
75g / 3oz packet dried onions
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)

SERVES 4-6

1 Turn out the broccoli on to a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, breaking up spears after 2 minutes. Drain.
2 Beat the eggs with the milk, stir in the broccoli and half of both the onions and cheese. Season well.
3 Pour the mixture into the cooked pie shell and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-15 minutes, or until almost set, turning the dish every 4 minutes.
4 Top with the remaining onions and cheese. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes until the cheese melts. Stand for 5 minutes.

Broccoli Quiche

Mushroom quiche

18½
mins

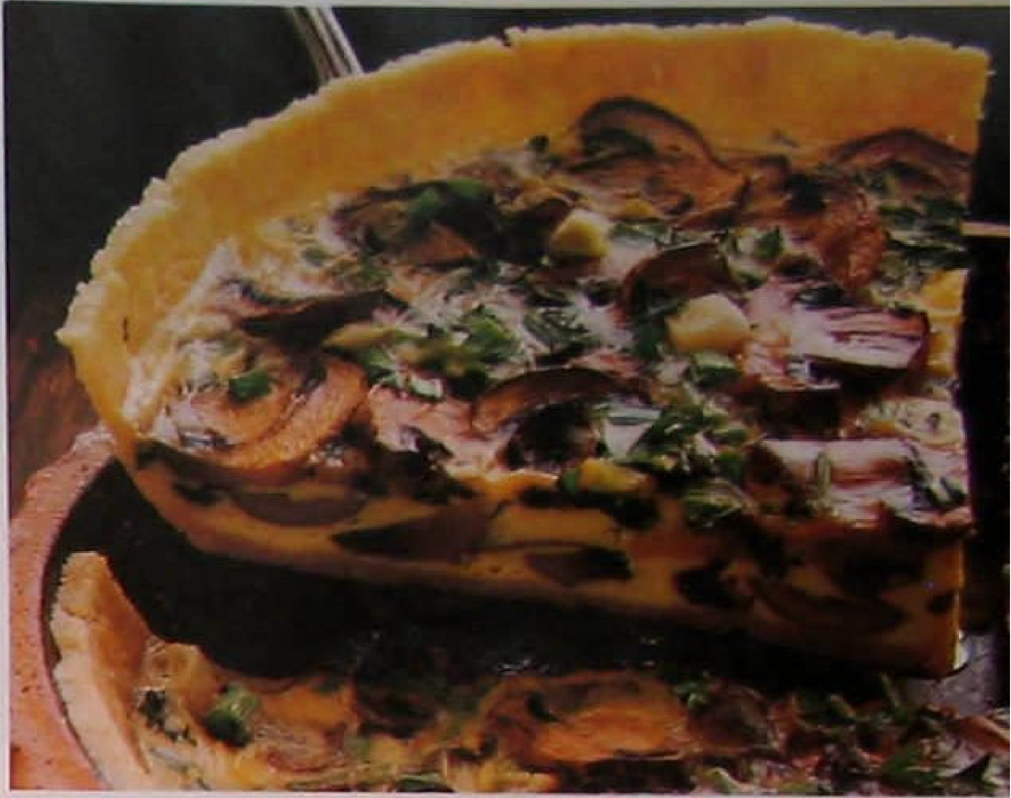
Standing time: 5 mins

This quiche is made with a breadcrumb case.

4 slices of white or wholemeal bread, crusts removed
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
45-60ml / 3-4tbls cold water
pinch of salt

FILLING
350g / 12oz button mushrooms, sliced
3 eggs, beaten
125ml / 4fl oz milk
4-6 spring onions, chopped
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4



How to microwave Mushroom quiche

Reduce *the bread to crumbs using a food processor. Add the butter or margarine and process until crumbly. Add water and salt. Mix to a soft dough.*

Press *the dough over the base and sides of an 18cm / 7in pie dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes until the sides appear dry. Set aside while preparing the filling.*

Place *the mushrooms in a large casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until tender, stirring once or twice. Spread the mushrooms in the cooked case.*

Beat *the eggs with the remaining ingredients in a 1.1L / 2pt dish. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 1 minute, stirring after 30 seconds and after 1 minute.*

Microwave *the egg mixture at 50% (Medium) for a further 1-2 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds, until hot but not set. Pour the mixture over the mushrooms in the prepared case.*

Continue *with power at 50% (Medium) and microwave for 10-14 minutes or until soft and just set, turning four times during cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.*

Pastry tartlet cases

3½ mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz plain white or wholewheat flour
pinch of salt
40g / 1½oz butter
40g / 1½oz lard or cooking margarine
30-45ml / 2-3tbls cold water

SERVES 6

1 Sift the flour and salt together, then cut in the butter and lard, or rub in using the fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

2 Add the water, a little at a time, stirring with a fork until the mixture starts to cling together.

3 Form the dough into a ball, then roll out on a lightly floured surface and cut out six rounds using a large, round cutter to fit the wells of a microwave muffin tray.

4 Grease the wells lightly and line with the pastry. Chill for 10 minutes. Trim the edges, allowing for high sides to each tartlet. Prick the base and sides with a fork.

5 Line each case with a double layer of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Remove the paper and microwave for a further 1½-2 minutes or until just dry. Use for tartlet recipes.

Spanish tartlets

9 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

½ small onion, finely chopped
¼ red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
25g / 1oz ham, chopped
6 cooked pastry tartlet cases (see above)
1 egg, beaten
125ml / 4fl oz milk
good pinch of dried oregano
salt and pepper
grated Parmesan cheese for sprinkling

SERVES 6

1 Combine the onion and red pepper in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until soft. Stir in the ham and divide the mixture between the cooked tartlet cases.

2 Mix the egg, milk, oregano and seasoning in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes until hot. Stir the custard mixture after a minute.

3 Pour the hot liquid over the onion mixture in the tartlet cases. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the tops and microwave for a further 1 minute, until set. Leave to stand for 10 minutes. Serve warm with a green salad.

Spanish and Blue Cheese Tartlets

RAY DUNS

Blue cheese tartlets

8 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

½ small onion, finely chopped
6 cooked pastry tartlet cases (see above)
1 egg, beaten
125ml / 4fl oz milk
40g / 1½oz blue cheese, crumbled
good pinch of chopped chervil or parsley
salt and pepper

MAKES 6

1 Place the onion in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until soft. Divide between the cooked pastry tartlet cases.

2 In a 1.1L / 2pt bowl, beat the egg and milk together. Mix in the cheese, chervil or parsley and seasoning. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes until hot, stirring the custard mixture after 1 minute.

3 Pour mixture over onion. Microwave the tartlets, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until set. Stand for 10 minutes. Serve warm with a tossed green salad.

VARIATION
This is also delicious made with a goat cheese such as Bucheron.

Spinach Quiche

Tuna mushroom tartlets

8
mins

Standing time: 10 mins

99g / 3½oz can tuna, drained and flaked
6 cooked pastry tartlet cases (see opposite page)
50g / 2oz mushrooms, finely chopped
125ml / 4fl oz milk
1 egg, beaten
grated zest of ½ lemon
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Divide tuna between the cooked tartlet cases. Place mushrooms in a bowl with 15ml / 1tbls milk. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Drain off the liquid and set aside.

2 Place the remaining ingredients in a large jug. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes until hot, stirring after 1 minute.

3 Add mushrooms to the hot mixture, stir well and pour over the tuna. Microwave uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes or until set. Stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Spinach quiche

19¾
mins

Standing time: 10 mins

275g / 10oz frozen chopped spinach
1 bacon rasher
2 eggs, lightly beaten
125ml / 4fl oz milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper
good pinch of grated nutmeg
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see page 370)

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the spinach in a bowl, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes or until thawed, breaking it apart after 2 minutes. Drain well.

2 Microwave the bacon between double layers of absorbent paper at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Chop and mix into the spinach with the eggs and milk. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes, or until slightly thickened, stirring every 2 minutes. Stir in half the cheese with the salt, pepper and nutmeg.

3 Pour into the cooked pastry case and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, or until nearly set, turning the dish every 2 minutes.

4 Sprinkle the quiche with the remaining cheese and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2 minutes. Leave to stand for 10 minutes to complete cooking before serving.

Cook's notes

To 'seal' a pastry case for a flan with a liquid filling, microwave the pastry case as in the recipe on page 370. Then brush the cooked case with lightly-beaten egg yolk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. This sets the egg and keeps the pastry crisp.

Double cheese quiche

18 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

30ml / 2tbls golden or browned breadcrumbs
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese, grated
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1 small onion, finely chopped
½ small green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
5 eggs, beaten
275ml / ½pt single cream
salt and pepper
1 tomato, sliced, to garnish

SERVES 4-6

1 Lightly grease a 23cm / 9in flan dish. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs into the dish, coating the inside completely. Mix the two cheeses together and sprinkle evenly over the base.

2 Combine the onion and green pepper in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender, stirring every 2 minutes.

3 Beat in the eggs, cream and seasoning to taste. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes or until the mixture is hot, stirring every 2 minutes.

4 Pour the mixture into the prepared flan dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes. Allow to stand for 5 minutes. Turn the dish, then microwave for a further 6-8 minutes or until set, turning after 3 minutes. The quiche is set when a knife inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to stand for 10 minutes. Garnish with tomato slices and serve hot or cold with vegetables or salad.

Microtips

For crisp-crusted results when reheating quiche, use a browning dish or a pizza browner. Heat at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the slice of quiche and continue to microwave until hot. A quarter slice of a 23cm / 9in quiche will take about 2 minutes.

Batch baking

Make up a batch of your own rubbed-in mix and keep it in the refrigerator. With the help of a microwave and a few last-minute extras, a delicious dessert or cake can be ready in minutes.

Ready-made, packaged dry mixtures for cakes, buns and scones are useful convenience items, readily available at supermarkets and local shops.

By making your own batch of basic make-ahead mix, you save both time and money. You need only go through the rubbing-in process once, and you will have enough storeable mix to make several tempting goodies. To use, simply weigh out the quantity of mix called for in the recipe, then add the rest of the ingredients.

Home-made rubbed-in mix keeps for 1-2 weeks in an airtight container in the refrigerator. If you wish to keep the mix for longer, omit the baking powder until just before using: add 10ml / 2tsp to every 100-175g / 4-6oz of mix and stir in very thoroughly.

Testing for doneness is always more difficult for goods baked in a microwave, since the lack of browning and the surface moisture resulting from microwaving can be misleading.

Rubbed-in mix produces comparatively drier results, so testing relies on touch: if the cake or scone springs back when lightly pressed with a finger, it is ready.

Microwave bakes tend to be pale, so make clever use of biscuit or breadcrumbs for an appetizing finish. If you want to experiment and create your own recipes using the basic rubbed-in mix, this is a good policy to follow.

To store batch bakes, wrap them closely in cling film and keep for up to two days. Refresh un-iced slices by microwaving at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.

Apple and Walnut Roll

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Basic rubbed-in mix

700g / 1½lb plain flour
60ml / 12tsp baking powder *
7.5ml / 1½tsp salt
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, diced

MAKES 800g / 1¾lb OF MIX

How to prepare Basic rubbed-in mix

Sift *together the flour and baking powder several times to ensure that they are evenly mixed. Using a spatula or a round-bladed knife, stir in the salt, mixing well.*

Rub in *butter until mixture resembles breadcrumbs, or use a mixer. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. This keeps in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.*

Apple and walnut roll

14¼ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

450g / 1lb cooking apples, sliced
45ml / 3tbls water
grated zest and juice of ½ lemon
4 cloves
60ml / 4tbls demerara sugar
175g / 6oz walnuts, chopped
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
225g / 8oz Basic rubbed-in mix
1 egg, beaten
milk for mixing
25g / 1oz butter
45ml / 3tbls rolled oats
30ml / 2tbls clear honey

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the apples in a shallow pie dish and add the water, lemon juice and cloves. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes. Allow to cool, then drain.

2 Mix the apples, demerara sugar, lemon zest and half the nuts.

3 Stir the caster sugar into the rubbed-in mix. Add sufficient milk to the egg to make up to 150ml / ¼pt. Beat together, then add to the rubbed-in mix and mix to a workable dough. Knead until smooth.

4 Roll the dough out to a 25 × 18cm / 10 × 7in rectangle on a large piece of greaseproof paper. Trim the edges, then brush them lightly with water. Arrange the apple mixture down the centre, leaving 2.5cm / 1in clear at each short end. Fold both long sides of the dough into the middle to overlap. Press short ends together to seal and trim them.

5 Using the paper, turn the roll so that the seam is underneath.

6 Melt the butter by microwaving, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Brush the top and sides of the dough with the butter and sprinkle with the oats. Snip V shapes at intervals down the top of the dough. Slide on to a flat, oblong serving dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes. Mix the honey and nuts and pour over the top.

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* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 3tbls baking powder.

Tea-time scones

2¾ mins

Standing time: none

275g / 10oz Basic rubbed-in mix
150ml / ¼pt milk
15g / ½oz butter
60-90ml / 4-6tbls breadcrumbs

MAKES 8

VARIATION

Bacon caraway scones Place 4 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed, on a double layer of absorbent paper. Cover with another piece and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Cool, then crumble it into the dry mix. Mix in 2.5ml / ½tsp caraway seeds, add the milk and continue recipe.

Tea-time Scones

Microtips

These scones are best eaten within a few hours of cooking as they dry out quickly. Refresh slightly stale scones by wrapping in absorbent paper and microwaving at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds.

Cook's notes

When handling the made-up dough, be sure to knead it lightly and quickly. Heavy handling toughens the dough and gives disappointing results.

How to microwave Tea-time scones

Place *the mix in a bowl. Add the milk and stir well until the mixture starts to cling together. (If the dough is too sticky, stir in a little more of the rubbed-in mixture.)*

Turn out *on to a lightly floured surface and knead briefly until free of cracks. Form into a ball, then roll out or pat out the dough to a round about 12mm / ½in thick.*

Cut *the dough into scones using an 6.5cm / 2½in round pastry cutter. Roll out the trimmings and cut into more scones. You should have at least eight scones.*

Melt *the butter by microwaving, covered, at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds. Brush the tops of the scones with butter and sprinkle with breadcrumbs.*

Arrange *the scones around the edge of a large plate, with one or two in the centre if necessary. Make sure that the sides of the scones are not touching each other.*

Microwave *the scones at 100% (High) for 2½-4 minutes (500 watt, 4½ minutes) until well risen and springy to the touch. Serve warm with butter and syrup or jam.*

Strawberry splits

2½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz Basic rubbed-in mix
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
100ml / 3½fl oz milk
1 egg, beaten
15g / ½oz butter
50g / 2oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
fresh strawberries and whipped cream, to serve

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the mix in a bowl and stir in the sugar. Add enough milk to the egg to make up to 125ml / 4fl oz. Beat together, then stir into the dry mixture and mix to a soft dough. Turn the dough out on to a lightly floured surface and knead briefly until smooth.
2 Roll out the dough until 12mm / ½in thick and cut into six or eight rounds using a 6.5cm / 2½in plain round cutter. Arrange the rounds in a ring on a plate.
3 Melt the butter by microwaving, covered, at 100% (High) for 5-10

Left: *Strawberry Splits*
Below: *Iced Cinnamon Ring*

seconds. Brush the tops of the rounds with melted butter and sprinkle with biscuit crumbs.

4 Microwave the biscuits at 100% (High) for 2½-4 minutes (500 watt, 4½ minutes), until risen and springy to the touch. Move to a wire rack and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Split and serve warm with fresh strawberries and whipped cream.

Iced cinnamon ring

5½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

75g / 3oz sugar
50g / 2oz ginger biscuits, crushed
10ml / 2tsps ground cinnamon
25g / 1oz hazelnuts, finely chopped, or shredded coconut
150ml / ¼pt milk
350g / 12oz Basic rubbed-in mix
40g / 1½oz butter

GLACÉ ICING
225g / 8oz icing sugar
30ml / 2tbls warm water

SERVES 8-10

1 Mix the sugar, biscuit crumbs, cinnamon and nuts. Stir the milk into the rubbed-in mix and work to a soft dough. Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Roll out to a round 12mm / ½in thick and cut into as many rounds as possible with a pastry cutter.

2 Cover and melt the butter at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds.

3 Dip the rounds in the butter, then roll them in the cinnamon crumb mixture to coat them evenly all over.

4 Oil a 1L / 2pt microwave ring mould and arrange the coated rounds on their sides around it. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes (500 watt, 6 minutes), until springy to touch.

5 Allow the ring to stand in the mould for 2 minutes, then turn out on to a serving plate.

6 Sift the icing sugar into a bowl and stir in enough warm water to give a coating consistency. Drizzle the icing over the cinnamon ring, allowing it to run down the sides.

Jammy buns

3¼ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
1 egg, beaten
45ml / 3tbls milk
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
25g / 1oz butter
175g / 6oz Basic rubbed-in mix
15-30ml / 1-2tbls jam or marmalade

SERVES 8

1 Oil a 23cm / 9in large plate and coat it with half of the biscuit crumbs. Oil the outside of a straight heatproof tall glass tumbler and coat the base lightly with crumbs. Stand the glass, open end up, in the centre of the plate.

2 Beat the egg, milk and flavouring together. Melt the butter by microwaving, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, then stir into the milk mixture.

3 Stir the liquid into the mix and beat until smooth. Drop dessertspoons of the mixture on to the prepared plate, around the glass, leaving 12mm / ½in between them. Sprinkle with remaining biscuit crumbs, then fill with jam (see Cook's notes, right).

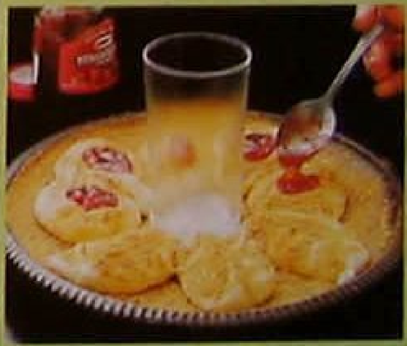
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes (500 watt, 4-5 minutes), or until the surface feels springy. Remove glass, cool buns slightly, and serve straight from the plate.

Microtips

When baking small amounts and quantities at a time in the microwave, as for cupcakes, muffins or scones, the timings for 500 watt machines are longer than for higher wattages. Where timings are short — and therefore crucial for successful results — a 500 watt time is given in individual recipes. For larger cakes, timings for 500 watt machines can be calculated in the usual way (see inside back cover), according to your particular microwave.

Jammy Buns

Cook's notes



To fill the buns: use a floured finger to make a dent in the centre of each spoonful of bun mixture. Sprinkle the remaining biscuit crumbs over the top, then spoon a little jam or marmalade into each dent.

Because jam attracts microwave energy and becomes very hot, the cooked buns need to be allowed to cool a little before they are served. (Otherwise the jam will be too hot.)

Cheese fondue party

Fondue parties — where you spear tasty morsels and dunk them in appetizing dips — are made more fun with a microwave, which leaves you free to join in.

Relaxed informality is the key to a successful fondue party. Pre-planning pays off as it means you will not be to-ing and fro-ing from kitchen to table and you can relax with your guests.

Organize all the dippers and salads and lay them out on the table beforehand, then bring in the hot fondue and meatballs and get the meal under way. Make the fondue in a flameproof, ceramic container and keep it hot on a heated tray. Otherwise, reheat the fondue during the course of the meal by microwaving it for 1-2 minutes at 30% (Low) if this is needed.

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It is surprisingly easy to consume a large amount when eating morsels of delicious food and without seeing a whole meal on a plate, so provide plenty of bread and vegetable dippers. Cauliflower and mushrooms are used here, but courgettes, small cherry tomatoes or pieces of marinated carrot would add a splash of colour.

Choose crisp, sharp flavours to balance the richness of melted cheese — and round off the meal with refreshing grape jellies topped with natural yoghurt.

Cook's notes

When serving a fondue you will need to provide your guests with long-handled forks to spear the dippers for dunking.

For dippers, a mixture of brown and white bread cut into cubes looks attractive, but you can use just one type if preferred.

Choose firm, close textured bread otherwise it will be hard to keep speared on the forks.

An enticing display for a successful fondue party.
Clockwise from left: *Vegetable Dippers, Swiss Fondue, Carrot and Lettuce Salad, Grape Jellies, Spiced Meatballs and Bread Medley.*

MENU

Spiced Meatballs
Piquant morsels for dipping

Swiss Fondue
Hot Gruyère cheese and wine dip

Bread Medley
Neat cubes of assorted bread

Carrot and Lettuce Salad
Gingered carrots on a bed of lettuce

Vegetable Dippers
Marinated cauliflower and mushrooms

Grape Jellies
Refreshing grape juice desserts

SERVES 6

Spiced meatballs

7½ mins

Standing time: none

1 egg, beaten
45ml / 3tbls milk
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 large onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
15ml / 1tbls oil
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
5ml / 1tsp curry paste

SERVES 6

1 Beat the egg with the milk and

Countdown

The day before
Prepare the grape jellies, but do not add the yoghurt topping, and leave in the refrigerator to set.

Early on the day
Prepare and microwave the meatballs. Leave in the refrigerator. Microwave the frosted grapes for the jellies and store in a cool, dry place.

Microwave the cauliflower and mushrooms and leave to marinate. Microwave the salad dressing; prepare the salad vegetables and store separately in sealed polythene bags in the refrigerator. Grate the cheese for the fondue.

Half an hour before the meal
Top the jellies with yoghurt, decorate with reserved grapes, and refrigerate. Cut the bread into 2.5cm / 1in cubes, including the crusts and cover with a layer of absorbent paper to keep fresh. Remove the cauliflower and mushrooms from the refrigerator, assemble the salad and add the dressing, if liked.

Microwave the fondue, keep warm while reheating the meatballs at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, turning twice. Place the meatballs decoratively on a platter.

Serve all the main dishes immediately.

stir in the breadcrumbs. Set aside for 10 minutes.

2 Mix the beef with the garlic, half of the onion, the parsley and salt and pepper. Beat in the egg and breadcrumb mixture.

3 Using dampened hands, roll the meat into a sausage shape, then divide it into 24 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball.

4 Season the flour with salt and pepper and use to coat the meatballs.

5 Place the oil in a bowl with the rest of the onion and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, until just tender. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, tomato purée and curry paste.

6 Arrange the meatballs on a flat dish and dab some of the onion mixture over each one using a pastry brush. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn and rearrange meatballs. Brush with rest of the onion sauce. Microwave for a further 4 minutes at 100% (High) rearranging every minute.

7 Serve hot with the cheese fondue, using fondue forks for spearing and dipping.

Swiss fondue

5 mins

Standing time: none

1 garlic clove, crushed
20ml / 4tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt dry white wine
275g / 10oz Gruyère cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls kirsch (optional)

SERVES 6

1 Cut the garlic in half and wipe the cut edges around the base and sides of a heatproof serving dish (a 1L / 2pt soufflé-style dish is ideal).

2 Place the cornflour in the dish and blend in 30ml / 2tbls wine. Stir in the remaining wine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.

3 Stir the cheese into the hot wine mixture. Microwave at 30% (Low) for a further 1 minute, stirring every 10 seconds. Stir in the kirsch, if using. Serve immediately with meatballs, crisp vegetables and bread for dipping, using forks for spearing.

Carrot and lettuce salad

1 min

Standing time: none

grated zest and juice of 1 orange
pinch of ground ginger
5ml / 1tsp sunflower or olive oil
5ml / 1tsp wine vinegar
salt and pepper
pinch of caster sugar (optional)
12 crisp lettuce leaves
5-6 carrots, coarsely grated
4 spring onions, finely chopped

SERVES 6

1 Microwave the orange zest and juice with the ginger, oil and vinegar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot. Leave to cool, then season to taste and add a pinch of sugar, if liked.

2 Use the lettuce leaves to line a large shallow bowl. Mix the carrots and onion and moisten with some of the dressing. Pile in the centre of the lettuce-lined bowl. Serve the remaining dressing separately.

Bread and Vegetable Dippers

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Grape Jellies

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Vegetable dippers

2 mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz cauliflower, cut into small florets
225g / 8oz small button mushrooms
30ml / 2tbls oil
30ml / 2tbls wine vinegar
1 small garlic clove, crushed
1 small onion, finely chopped
pinch of ground coriander
5ml / 1tsp French mustard
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Mix the cauliflower and mushrooms in a large bowl.

2 Pour the oil and vinegar into a screw-top jar. Add the garlic, onion, coriander, mustard and salt and pepper. Cover tightly and shake vigorously to blend the dressing thoroughly.

3 Pour the dressing over the vegetables and toss well to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring well after 1 minute.

4 Allow to cool, then cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 6-8 hours. Serve at room temperature with fondue forks.

Grape jellies

6 mins

Standing time: none

575ml / 1pt white grape juice
2 strips of pared lemon zest
17.5ml / 3½tsp powdered gelatine
30ml / 2tbls sugar
350g / 12oz white grapes, peeled and seeded
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
frosted grapes (see Microtips)

SERVES 6

1 Microwave grape juice and lemon zest at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot. Set aside for 10 minutes. Remove the zest.

2 Measure 60ml / 4tbls of juice into a bowl and sprinkle with gelatine. Mix in sugar. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes, until gelatine and sugar dissolve.

3 Mix the gelatine into grape juice. Chill for 2 hours.

4 Divide the peeled grapes between six dessert glasses and spoon the jelly over the top. Refrigerate for a further 2-3 hours.

5 Spoon the yoghurt over jellies and decorate with frosted grapes.

Microtips

Divide a bunch of 12 grapes into clusters of two. Dip in lightly-beaten egg white. Drain off excess, then coat generously in caster sugar. Arrange in circle on greaseproof paper on floor of microwave cooker. Cook at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3½ minutes, rearranging once.

Cook's notes

To prepare the grapes, loosen the skin at the stalk end with a clean thumbnail. Work around the grape and very gently pull away the skin. To remove the pips make a slit in the grape from the stalk end, without cutting it in half, then flick out the pips with the point of a knife.

Stir-fry suppers

Colourful stir-fry dishes of tender-crisp vegetables and juicy strips of meat make delicious and nutritious eating and — believe it or not — are easier to cook the microwave way than with a conventional wok.

Stir-frying is becoming increasingly popular for its speed, simplicity and delicious results. Although stir-frying in the microwave takes roughly the same time as the conventional wok method of cooking, it is much simpler. Since less stirring is needed, you are free to do other things. An added bonus is a reduction in cooking smells, which means the kitchen does not reek of frying for hours afterwards.

Microwaved stir-fry dishes are speedy and successful because the meat, poultry or vegetables are cut into uniform-sized pieces before being cooked. This means they cook quickly and evenly without losing their texture, flavour and colour. To save time later on, prepare the ingredients earlier in the day — cut the vegetables and meat to size, then keep in covered containers in the refrigerator until needed.

Cutting and slicing of meat and vegetables to the size stated in the recipe is most important to ensure that all ingredients are cooked to perfection. Strips of steak and chicken are both ideally suited to this method of cooking — even pork, when cut in strips, can be cooked this way in a matter of minutes.

Oriental Stir-fry

Microtips

When using a browning dish, always check with your manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat the dish for longer than the recommended time, as this can damage the glass turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on a special microwave trivet.

Cook's notes

When slicing steak, always cut across the grain for tender, juicy results. Cutting along the grain causes it to toughen on cooking.

Vegetable stir-fry

9 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
283g / 10oz packet frozen sweetcorn kernels
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
salt and pepper

SERVES 3-4

VARIATION

To use canned corn kernels, drain well and stir into the cooked pepper and onion. Heat through at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes.

Oriental stir-fry

15 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
450g / 1lb flash-fry, minute or rump steak, cut across the grain into very thin strips
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
6 spring onions, sliced
227g / 8oz can bamboo shoots, drained and sliced
230g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
225g / 8oz fresh beansprouts
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
22.5ml / 1½tbls water
15ml / 1tbls sugar

SERVES 4-6

1 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or follow manufacturer's instructions.

2 Add the oil, celery, sliced onion and steak strips. Stir well, then cook, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.

3 Add the sliced mushrooms and, cook, uncovered, for 2 minutes. Stir in the spring onions, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts and beansprouts. Combine the soy sauce, water and sugar and pour over the vegetable and steak mixture.

4 Cook at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring twice during the cooking time.

How to microwave Vegetable stir-fry

Preheat *a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions (see Microtips, opposite page).*

Add *the butter, sweetcorn kernels, green pepper and onion. Cover with a lid or vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes.*

Stir, *then microwave for a further 2-2½ minutes until vegetables are tender and sweetcorn is hot. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Allow to stand for 2-3 minutes before serving.*

Pork chow mein

16 mins

Standing time: none

45ml / 3tbls oil
450g / 1lb pork fillet, cut into thin strips
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
4 spring onions, sliced
225g / 8oz fresh beansprouts
230g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
30ml / 2tbls sliced pimiento
20ml / 4tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine
60ml / 4tbls soy sauce
10ml / 2tsp sugar
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to the manufacturer's instructions.

2 Add the oil and pork strips and stir well. Cook, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir twice.

3 Stir in the celery, mushrooms and spring onions. Cover and cook for 3 minutes at 100% (High) stirring once. Add the beansprouts, water chestnuts and pimiento, recover and cook at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Remove from the microwave and reserve.

4 Smoothly blend the cornflour with water in a bowl, then stir in the wine, soy sauce, sugar and pepper to taste. Cook at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, whisking the mixture twice until boiling and thickened.

5 Pour over meat and vegetable mixture and stir well. Cover the mixture and return to the microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until heated through. Serve with chow mein noodles or plainly boiled rice.

Cook's notes

Canned beansprouts may be used to replace the fresh type. Drain and rinse them well in cold water, then drain well again and pat dry on absorbent paper before using.

Ginger chicken and mange tout

16 mins

Standing time: none

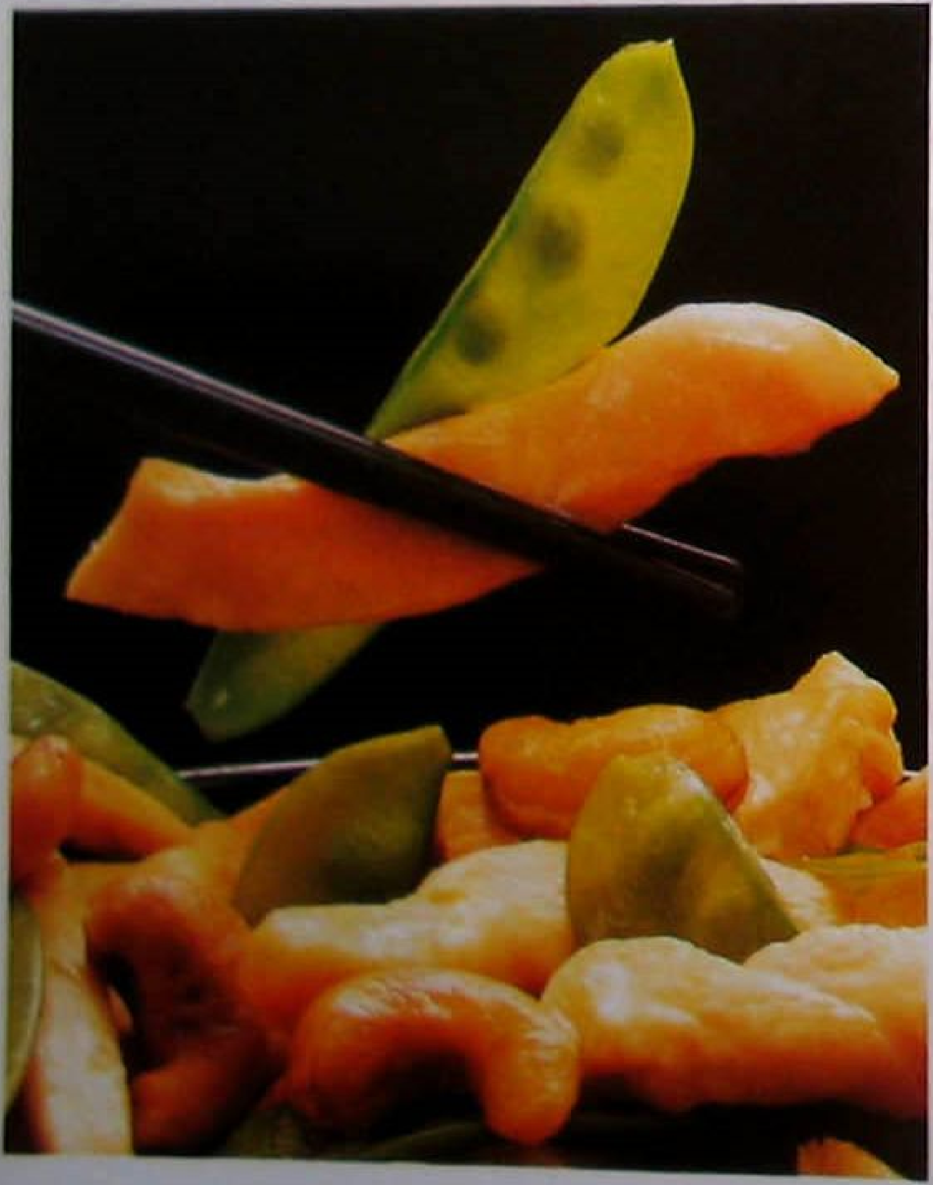
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
450g / 1lb boneless chicken breasts, skinned and cut into thin strips
1 onion, chopped (optional)
225g / 8oz mange tout, topped and tailed
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated fresh root ginger
¼ chicken stock cube, crumbled
2.5ml / ½tsp tomato purée or paste
50g / 2oz cashew nuts
15ml / 1tbls sherry

SERVES 4

1 Heat a large browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to the manufacturer's instructions.

2 Add the oil, chicken and onion, if using, and stir well. Cook at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking. Add the mange tout and cook at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring once, until just tender-crisp.

3 Mix together the cornflour, soy sauce, ginger and crumbled stock cube and tomato purée. Add to dish with the cashews and stir well. Cook, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once. Stir in the sherry. Serve with rice and prawn crackers.



Ginger Chicken and Mange Tout

Stir-fry steak with pepper

17½ mins

Standing time: none

- 450g / 1lb flash-fry, minute or rump steak
- 30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
- 15ml / 1tbls paprika
- 1 green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 6 spring onions, sliced
- 2 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
- 30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
- 125ml / 4fl oz water
- ½ beef stock cube, crumbled
- 22.5ml / 4½tsp cornflour

SERVES 4

How to microwave Stir-fry steak with pepper

Trim *away any fat from the steak. Cut steak, across the grain, into 6mm / ¼in thick strips. Mix soy sauce and paprika in a bowl and add the strips of steak. Mix until the steak strips are thoroughly coated.*

Prepare *the vegetables. Heat a large browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil to preheated browning dish, then add beef strip mixture; stir well.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, stirring once. Add the prepared green pepper, sliced celery, crushed garlic and 50ml / 2fl oz water. Stir in the crumbled stock cube and mix well.*

Cover *the dish again, reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave the mixture for 6-8 minutes or until the vegetables are tender-crisp, stirring halfway through the cooking time.*

Smoothly *blend the cornflour with the remaining 50ml / 2fl oz water and stir into the meat and vegetable mixture. Add the spring onion slices and chopped tomato and stir well until thoroughly combined.*

Increase *the power to 100% (High). Microwave the meat and vegetable mixture, uncovered, for 4-5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened, stirring twice during cooking. Serve the stir-fry over boiled rice.*

Chicken and spinach stir-fry

14 mins

Standing time: none

This recipe combines two wonderful vegetables — buttery spinach and crunchy mange tout with lean succulent chicken.

450g / 1lb boneless chicken breast, skinned and cut into thin strips
25g / 1oz butter
3 celery stalks, thinly sliced
225g / 8oz mange tout, topped and tailed
225g / 8oz fresh spinach, washed, stalks removed and leaves torn into bite-sized pieces
50g / 2oz slivered blanched almonds

MARINADE
50ml / 2fl oz soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls sherry
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
5ml / 1tsp sugar
salt
large pinch of grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp fresh root ginger, grated
1 garlic clove, crushed

SERVES 3-4

How to microwave Chicken and spinach stir-fry

Combine *the marinade ingredients in a bowl. Stir in chicken strips and reserve. Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to maker's instructions. Add butter.*

Add *the chicken and marinade mixture and stir immediately to prevent it sticking. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring well after 2 minutes.*

Stir *in the sliced celery, then cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Mix in the mange tout and the spinach and stir the ingredients together until thoroughly combined. Re-cover.*

Microwave *the mixture at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring twice during cooking, until the mange tout are tender-crisp and the spinach is cooked. Stir in the slivered almonds. Serve with rice or noodles.*

Sautéed peppers

10 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into 6mm × 5cm / ¼ × 2in strips
1 red pepper seeded and cut into 6mm × 5cm / ¼ × 2in strips
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp light soy sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp very finely chopped fresh root ginger (optional)
pepper

SERVES 3-4 AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT

1 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions.
2 Add the oil, then stir in the pepper strips, sliced mushrooms and crushed garlic. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
3 Add the soy sauce, ginger, if using, and pepper to taste. Microwave for a further 2-3 minutes, stirring once.

Below: *Sautéed Peppers*

Liqueurs

Delicious liqueurs are easily made in the microwave using a variety of flavourings and spirits. Try combining apricots with brandy or raspberries with vodka.

Liqueurs are made by combining a flavoured syrup with a spirit. The microwave is ideal for cooking the syrup, as it does away with the need for constant stirring and the danger of the syrup scorching. Choose a heatproof bowl, large enough to avoid boiling over.

Many fruits make perfect flavourings for the syrup or other, non-fruity, flavourings may be used, such as mint, coffee and aniseed (see recipes).

Any spirit is suitable as a base for the liqueurs. Vodka, being colourless and virtually tasteless, is best. White rum and gin are also colourless. Brandy, rum or whisky give a good rich colour.

Liqueurs are ready for drinking after one month, but they improve with keeping and should be stored in a cool, dark place.

Orange liqueur

2½ mins

Standing time: none

A delicious after-dinner drink, this liqueur is also good sprinkled over fruit desserts.

3 oranges
225g / 8oz sugar
1 cinnamon stick
450ml / 16fl oz brandy

MAKES 700ml / 1¼pt

1 Thinly pare the zest from one orange with a vegetable peeler, making sure there is absolutely no white pith attached.

2 Cut all the oranges in half and squeeze the juice. Measure and make the juice up to 225ml / 8fl oz with water if necessary.

3 Combine the orange zest and juice, sugar and cinnamon in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until boiling, stirring every minute.

4 Boil for 30 seconds, watching carefully to make sure the syrup does not boil over. Cool.

5 Remove the cinnamon stick and strain the liquid through muslin. Stir in the brandy, then pour into a bottle. Seal with a cork or screw top. Store in a cool, dark place for at least 1 month and preferably for 5-6 months, shaking the bottle occasionally to mix the ingredients up.

Left to right: *Apricot Liqueur, Crème de Menthe, Anise Liqueur, Raspberry Liqueur, Coffee Liqueur and Orange Liqueur. Serve in tiny glasses with after-dinner coffee, or use as a boozy sauce for ices or fruit.*

Crème de menthe

8 mins

Standing time: none

Crème de menthe is a green peppermint liqueur that makes an interesting mixer for cocktails.

350g / 12oz sugar
225ml / 8fl oz water
350ml / 12fl oz vodka or gin
5ml / 1tsp peppermint essence
1.5ml / ¼tsp green food colouring

MAKES 1.1L / 2pt

1 Combine sugar and water in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until boiling. Continue to boil for 5 minutes, watching very carefully to make sure the syrup does not boil over.

2 Cool to room temperature then skim any foam from the surface. Stir in the spirit, peppermint and food colouring.

3 Pour into a bottle and seal with a cork or screw top. Store in a cool, dark place for 1 month, shaking the bottle occasionally.

Anise liqueur

3 mins

Standing time: none

Anise extract is sometimes known as anise essence or anise water. Substitute 30ml / 2tbls Pernod if the anise extract is not available.

350g / 12oz golden syrup
125ml / 4fl oz water
15ml / 1tbls cold tea
350ml / 12fl oz vodka
3ml / ¾tsp anise extract
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla essence
2 drops yellow food colouring

MAKES 575ml / 1pt

1 Combine the syrup, water and cold tea in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until boiling. Watch to ensure against boil-over.

2 Cool, then skim the surface.

3 Stir in the vodka, anise extract, vanilla and food colouring. Pour into a bottle and seal with a cork or screw top.

4 Store in a cool, dark place for at least 1 month, shaking the bottle occasionally to mix.

Raspberry liqueur

6 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb frozen raspberries
350g / 12oz sugar
350ml / 12fl oz vodka

MAKES 850ml / 1½pt

1 Microwave the raspberries in a large bowl at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, or until partially thawed. Separate the berries with a fork and leave at room temperature until thawed.

2 Drain the juice from the raspberries into a large bowl and stir in the sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until boiling and the sugar has dissolved. Stir every minute.

3 Cool, then skim the surface. Add the reserved raspberries and vodka. Pour into a jar and seal with a screw top.

4 Store in a cool, dark place for at least 1 month, shaking the bottle occasionally to mix. Strain through muslin and discard the raspberries, then pour into a clean bottle and store until needed.

Coffee liqueur

8
mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz sugar
225ml / 8fl oz water
15g / ½oz instant coffee granules
350ml / 12fl oz vodka
1 vanilla pod or 5ml / 1tsp vanilla essence

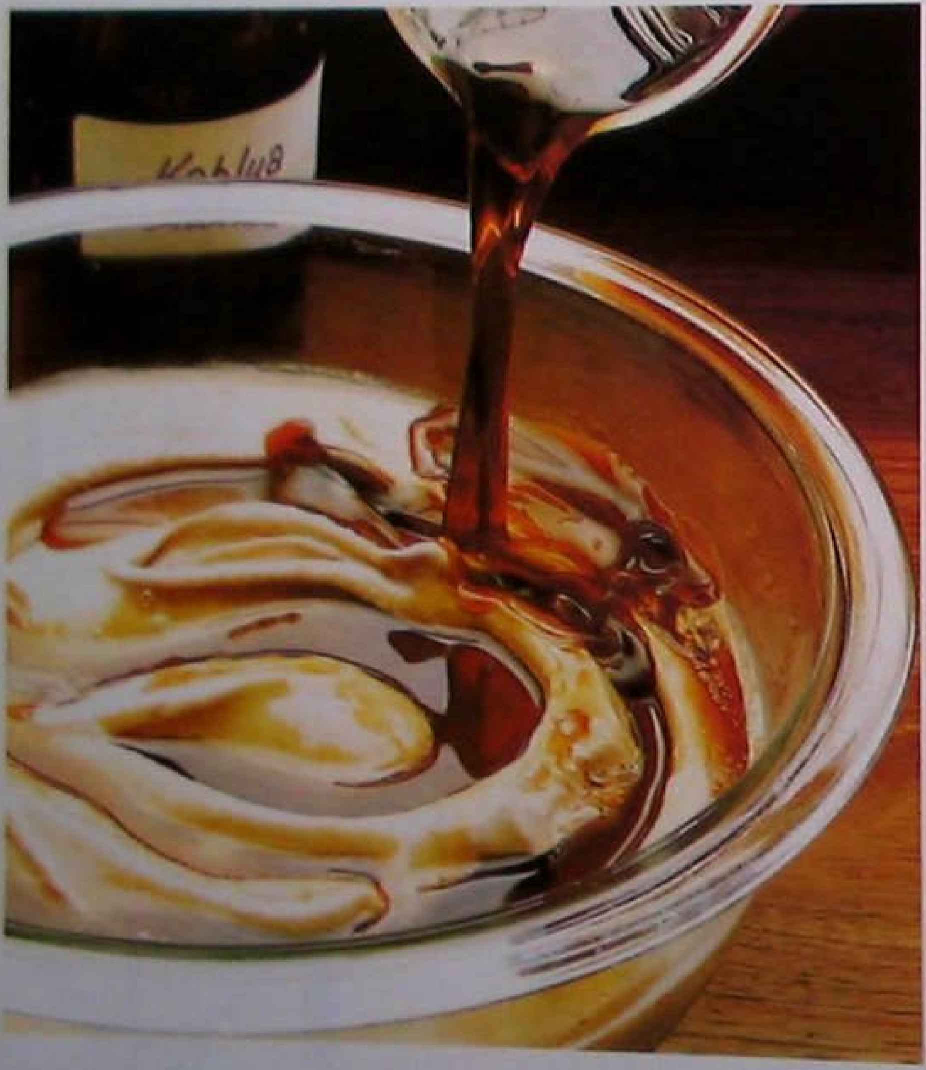
MAKES 700ml / 1¼pt

1 Combine the sugar and water in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until boiling. Continue to boil for 5 minutes; watch carefully to ensure against boil-over.

2 Stir in the coffee until dissolved, then cool and skim any foam from the surface and add the vodka and vanilla.

3 Pour into a bottle and seal with a cork or screw top. Store in a cool, dark place for 1 month, shaking the bottle occasionally to mix. Leave the vanilla pod in the bottle as it will continue to add flavour to the liqueur.

VARIATION
Use rum instead of the vodka and you will have a similar liqueur to Jamaican Tia Maria.



Liqueur Ice Cream

Apricot brandy

3
mins

Standing time: none

This sweetened fruit brandy is easy to make with a microwave.

175g / 6oz dried apricots, chopped
350ml / 12fl oz white wine
225g / 8oz sugar
225ml / 8fl oz brandy

MAKES 575ml / 1pt

1 Combine the apricots, wine and sugar in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until boiling. Stir every minute and make sure all the sugar has dissolved.

2 Cool the mixture to room temperature, then skim any foam from the surface. Stir in the brandy.

3 Pour into a bottle (see Cook's notes, below) and seal with a cork or screw top. Store the liqueur in a cool, dark place for at least 1 month, shaking the bottle occasionally to mix.

4 Before serving, strain the liqueur and pour into a clean bottle. Save the apricots and serve with ice cream for an easy dessert or use in a fruit cake.

Liqueur ice cream

½
min

Standing time: none

1.1L / 2pt block ice cream
75ml / 3fl oz liqueur

SERVES 4-6

1 Cut the ice cream into quarters and place in a microwave/freezer-proof bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds, or until soft.

2 Stir in liqueur and freeze for 1 hour.

3 Stir again, cover with foil and freeze until needed.

Flavour combinations
- Coffee liqueur with chocolate, vanilla or coffee ice cream.
- Crème de menthe with chocolate ice cream.
- Raspberry liqueur with peach or chocolate ice cream.

Cook's notes

When the liqueur is ready to be bottled, pour it through a funnel — this is the safest and easiest way to avoid spills.

To make the liqueur ice cream, do not use 'soft scoop' ice cream. This is too soft and may melt when the liqueur is added.

Cook's notes

It is very important not to remove any white pith with the zest as it has a bitter taste and will spoil the liqueur. Use a swivel-type peeler to pare the zest from the fruit.

Liqueur cups

1
min

Standing time: none

These cups combine chocolate and liqueur and are delicious served with after-dinner coffee.

50g / 2oz plain chocolate,
broken up
knob of butter
liqueur to serve

MAKES 10

Boozy orange flavouring

½
min

Standing time: none

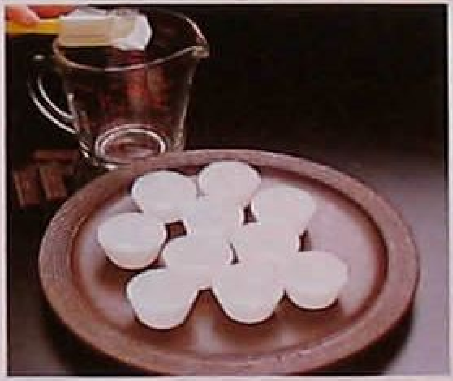
1 orange
125ml / 4fl oz vodka

MAKES 125ml / 4fl oz

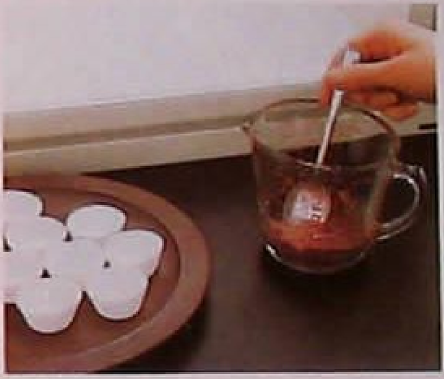
1 Remove the zest from the orange using a vegetable peeler, (see Cook's notes, left). Cut into long, thick shreds.
2 Place the zest in a 125ml / 4fl oz heatproof wide-necked glass bottle or jar. Add the vodka. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until the glass is warm to touch.
3 Seal with a screw top or cork and leave to stand at room temperature for 2 weeks before using as a flavouring for fruit desserts, casseroles, sauces or gravy.

Boozy Orange Flavouring

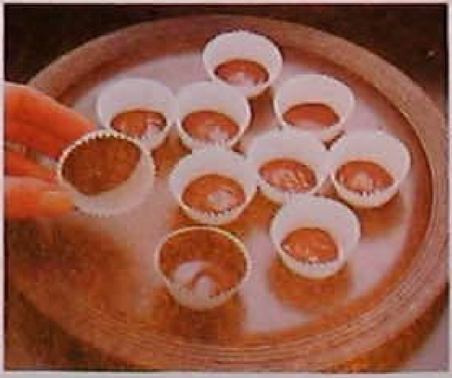
How to microwave Liqueur cups



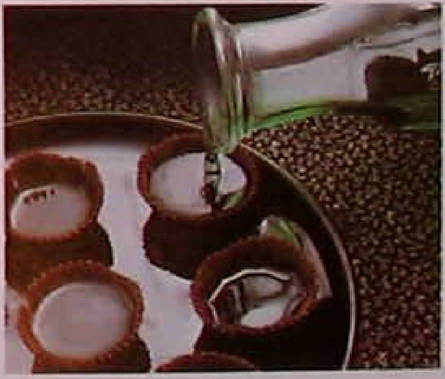
Use *two paper sweet cases for each cup. Arrange on a flat plate. Place chocolate and butter in a jug.*



Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes, until the mixture is glossy and smooth. Stir twice.*



Spoon *5ml / 1tsp chocolate into each case. Tilt to coat the sides to just below the rim to make a thick shell.*



Chill *for 1 hour then carefully peel cases from chocolate shells. Chill again to firm. Fill with liqueur to serve.*

Curries

Cook up a spicy, fragrant curry the modern way in your microwave — and you can enjoy an exotic Indian meal with the maximum ease and the minimum fuss.

The traditional way to cook a curry is slowly and gently, so the fragrant spices can permeate the food and the flavours have time to blend and mellow. But cooking a curry the modern way, in a microwave, doesn't allow time for this. The clever way to get round the problem is to marinate the meat or fish in spices beforehand, giving it a chance to absorb the aromatic and distinctive flavours.

As in all microwave meat cookery, it is important to stir and turn frequently to maintain even cooking throughout. For chops and chicken pieces, make sure the fleshiest part is towards the outside. Cut braising steak into 12mm / ½in cubes or thin strips — this speeds up the cooking. Standing time of 5-10 minutes also helps to tenderize the meat.

Use fresh, not stale, spices and curry powders, or your curry will have a musty flavour. Buy small quantities and use quickly.

Chicken in spiced yoghurt

23 mins

Standing time: none

Chapatis are an ideal accompaniment to this exotic curry.

8 chicken drumsticks

MARINADE

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed

Chicken in Spiced Yoghurt

ANDREW WHITTUCK

2.5ml / 1in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
10ml / 2tsp chilli powder
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cloves
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cardamom
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt natural yoghurt
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
plain boiled rice to serve
lime slices and fresh coriander to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Skin the drumsticks and pierce the flesh a few times with a sharp knife. Place in a large bowl.

2 Place the oil, onion, garlic, ginger, spices and seasoning in a bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes until the onion is soft.

3 Blend in yoghurt and lemon juice. Pour over chicken. Cover and leave to marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, or overnight.

4 Lift the drumsticks from the yoghurt and arrange in a shallow, dish with the fleshy parts of the chicken to the outside. Pour the natural yoghurt over the chicken pieces.

5 Cover and cook at 70% (Medium-High) for 20 minutes, turning several times.

6 Brown under a hot grill for 3-4 minutes. Serve on a bed of rice and garnish with lime slices and fresh coriander.

Beef and tomato curry

60 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

700g / 1½lb braising steak, thinly sliced
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1 onion, finely chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and diced
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
400g / 14oz can tomatoes, drained with juice reserved
5ml / 1tsp Madras curry powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the steak, celery, onion and green pepper in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking, or until the surface of the meat is no longer pink.

2 Blend the cornflour with a little of the reserved tomato juice, then stir in the remaining juice. Stir into the casserole with the tomatoes, curry powder and salt and pepper.

3 Cover and cook at 30% (Low) for 50 minutes, stirring three times during cooking, or until the meat is tender. Stand for 10 minutes.

VARIATION

Use chuck steak or diced lamb instead of braising steak, if you prefer, for this easy curry.

Beef and Tomato Curry

Chapatis

This traditional Indian bread makes an ideal accompaniment to Chicken in Spiced Yoghurt.

100g / 4oz wholemeal flour
65g / 2½oz strong white flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
125ml / 4fl oz lukewarm water

MAKES 8

1 Sift flours and salt into a bowl. Tip in bran left in sieve. Gradually stir in water to make a dough. Turn out and knead for 10 minutes on a well-floured surface until smooth. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate overnight.

2 Knead dough until pliable. Divide into eight equal-sized pieces and roll each out into a 11.5cm / 4½in circle.

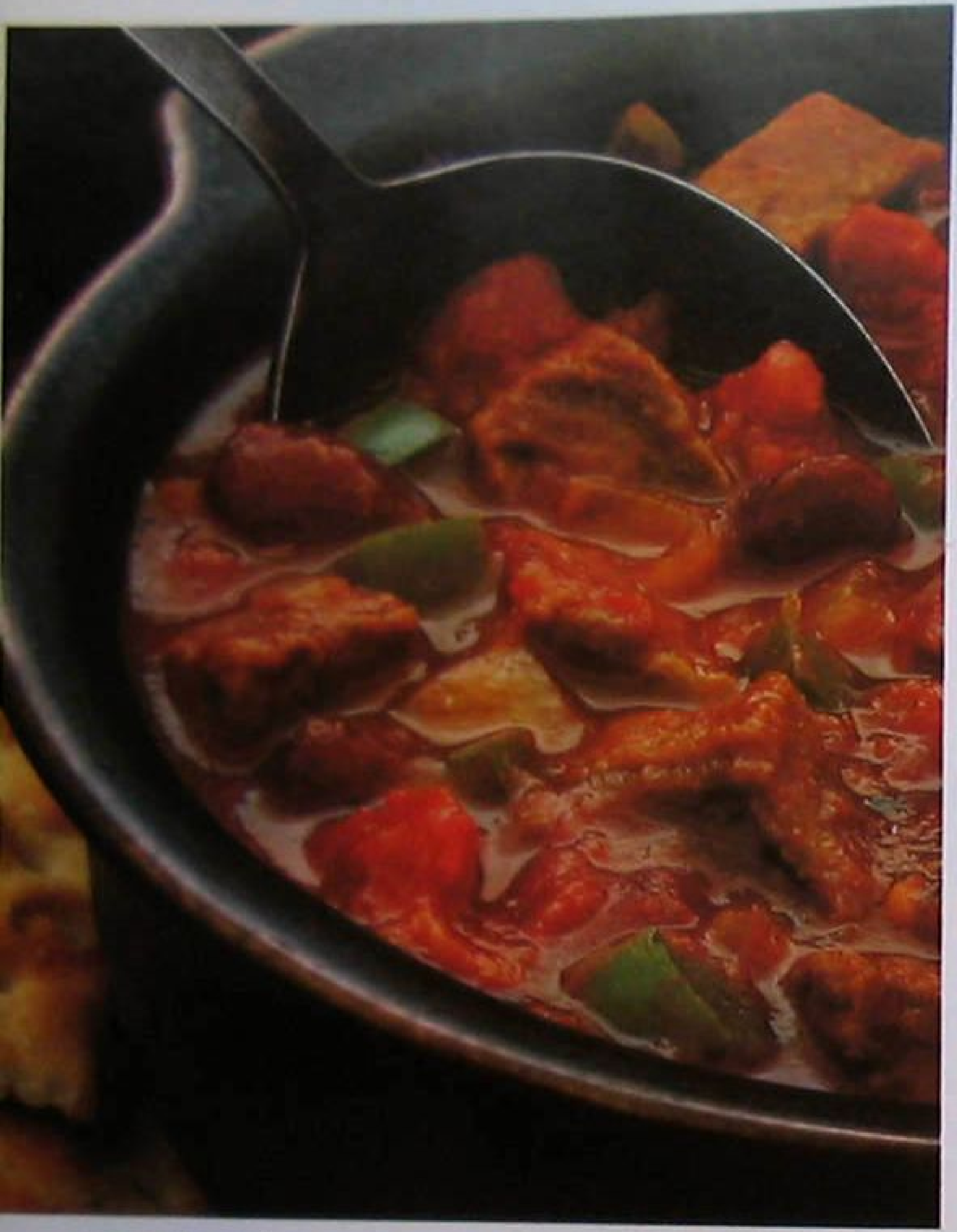
3 Heat a heavy frying pan until very hot. Fry chapatis for about 10 seconds on one side and 20 seconds on the other, or until the underside starts to brown.

Microtips

Chapatis should be served piping hot. Reheat them, two at a time, in the microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds-1 minute until they are hot and puffed up.

Cook's notes

Different brands of flour vary in the quantity of liquid they absorb. The dough for chapatis should be quite firm, but not too stiff. If the dough is too soft and sticky, work in a little extra flour to make it more firm. If the dough is too dry, add more water. Use plenty of plain or wholemeal flour for rolling out the chapatis to prevent them from sticking or tearing.



Beef and kidney bean curry

70 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

A one-step curry: put all the ingredients into the casserole and, following the steps below, let the microwave do the rest.

700g / 1½lb braising steak, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes.
1 onion, chopped
1 green or red pepper, seeded and diced
1 garlic clove, crushed
400g / 14oz can red kidney beans, drained
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
60ml / 4tbls tomato purée or paste
5ml / 1tsp brown sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp chilli powder
15ml / 1tbls chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

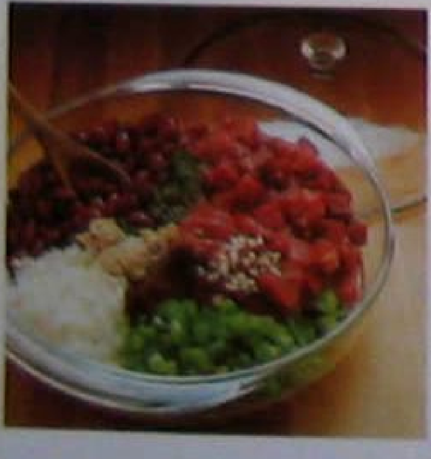
Accompaniments

Curries are often served with simple plain boiled rice. Microwave rice (see Part 2, back cover) and reheat just before serving.

Other traditional accompaniments are poppadums (see Part 22, back cover), chutneys and pickles.

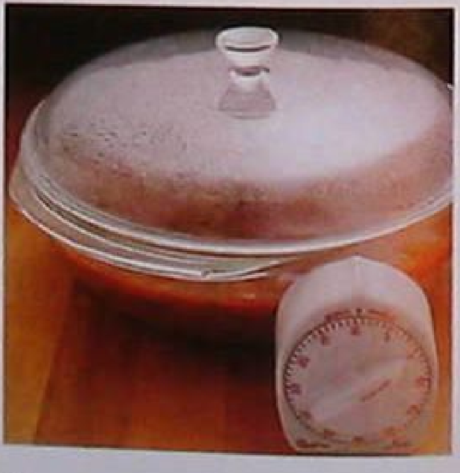
You can also serve any of the sambals (side dishes) suggested for Indian chicken (page 635).

How to microwave Beef and kidney bean curry



Place *ingredients in a large casserole. Stir well. Cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir well.*

Reduce *power to 30% (Low). Microwave for 65 minutes, stirring three or four times during cooking.*



Remove *casserole from microwave when meat is tender. Leave to stand for 10 minutes, covered, before serving.*

Fruited pork curry

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50ml / 2fl oz cider vinegar
15ml / 1tbls golden syrup
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
100ml / 3½fl oz water
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb pork tenderloin or fillet, cut in 5cm × 6mm / 2 × ¼in slices
5ml / 1tsp Madras curry powder
1 red eating apple, diced
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
50g / 2oz raisins
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
310g / 10½oz canned mandarin orange segments, drained with 50ml / 2fl oz syrup reserved

SERVES 4

1 Mix the vinegar, golden syrup, soy sauce, water and seasoning together in a casserole dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking. Leave to go cold.

2 Add the pork, cover and leave to marinate for 1 hour.

3 Drain, reserving 30ml /2tbls of the marinade. Microwave the pork, covered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-6 minutes. Stir halfway through cooking. Add reserved marinade, curry powder, apple, walnuts and raisins.

4 Blend cornflour with mandarin syrup, stir into pork. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-17 minutes, stirring two or three times. Stir in the mandarin segments. Stand for 5 minutes.

Freezer notes

Fruited Pork Curry can be frozen for up to 1 month. Freeze before adding cornflour.

To thaw, place the frozen curry in a casserole, cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 15 minutes, stirring two or three times. Stir in mandarin segments, and cornflour blended with reserved syrup. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until thickened, stirring three or four times.

Hot curried lamb

15 mins

Standing time: none

Serve these curried lamb chops with sauté potatoes.

5cm / 2in piece fresh root ginger, peeled
5ml / 1tsp ground coriander
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 green chillies, trimmed and seeded (see Cook's notes, right)
juice of 2 lemons
4 lamb chump chops, boned and trimmed of excess fat

SERVES 4

1 Place the ginger, coriander, garlic, chillies and lemon juice in a food processor or blender and blend to a thin purée. Pour over the lamb and leave to marinate in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

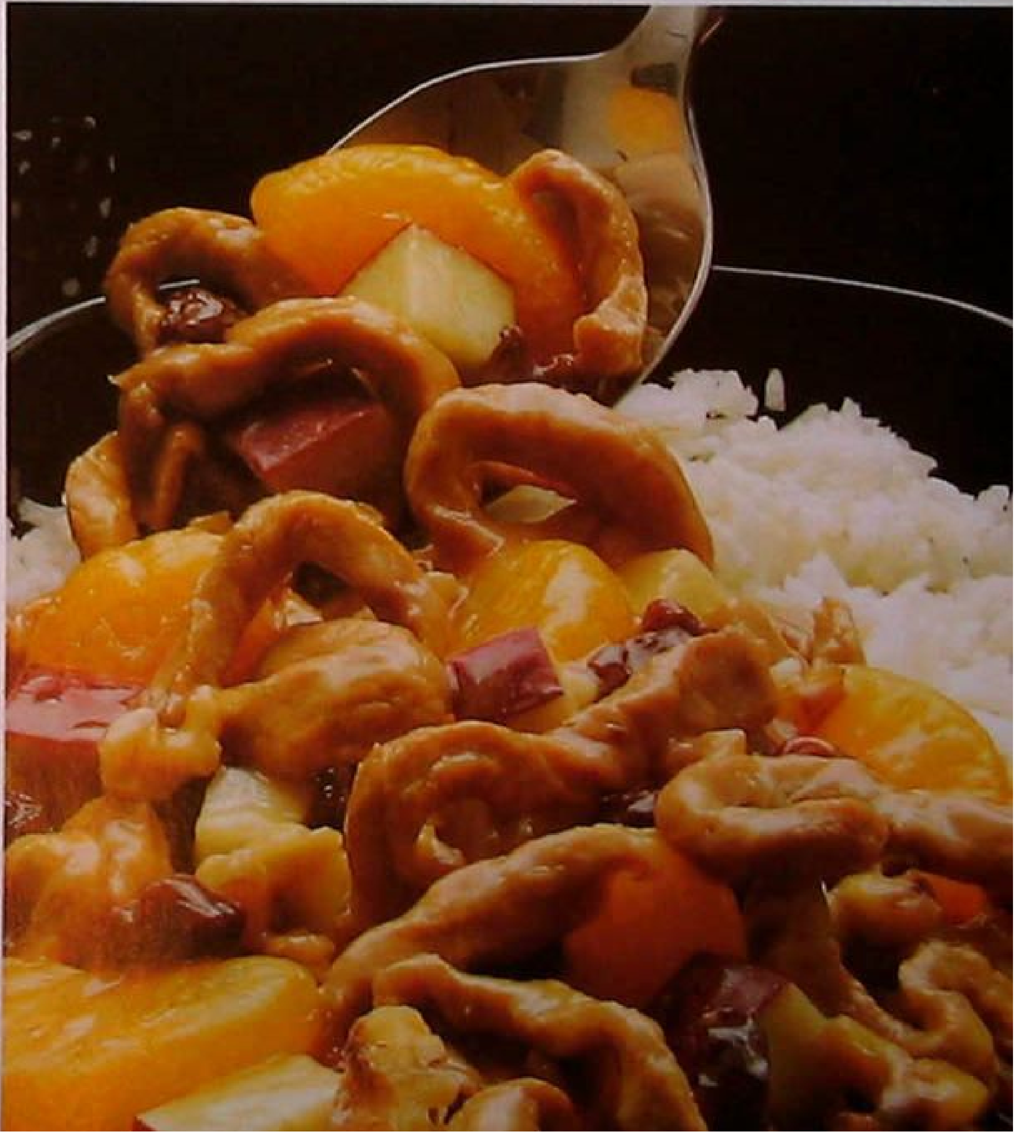
2 Preheat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions. Drain the chops, reserving the marinade, and sear in the dish for 1 minute on each side.

3 Transfer to a shallow dish and add the reserved marinade. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-15 minutes, or until the meat is tender, turning halfway through cooking. Serve with the juices.

Cook's notes

Chillies have a powerful flavour and their seeds are hot and pungent. For a milder flavour, slit the pod lengthways and remove the white seeds with the tip of a knife. Your face and eyes will burn if you touch them afterwards, so wash your hands immediately. Better still, wear rubber gloves to prepare chillies.

Fruited Pork Curry



White fish curry

7¾
mins

Standing time: none

Choose firm fleshed fish, such as cod or halibut for this recipe.

50g / 2oz frozen prawns
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
105ml / 7tbls bottled sieved tomatoes, or canned tomato purée
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
3 cardamom pods, seeded and crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
pepper
800g / 1¾lb cod fillets, skinned and cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
15ml / 1tbls single cream

SERVES 4

1 Arrange prawns in a shallow dish. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10-20 seconds until thawed. Set aside.
2 Place the oil in a casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, spices and pepper. Stir well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring once.
3 Add fish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring once.
4 Add the prawns and cream and cook for a further 1 minute.

White Fish Curry

RAY DUNS

Lamb and rice curry

25
mins

Standing time: none

An easy curry, where meat and rice are cooked together.

450g / 1lb neck fillet of lamb or best neck lamb chops, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1 onion, finely chopped
450ml / 16fl oz hot water
175g / 6oz long-grain rice
50g / 2oz raisins
2 celery stalks, chopped
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp hot curry powder
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
chopped cashew nuts and chopped spring onions to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place the lamb and onion in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Stir halfway through cooking.
2 Pour off the fat and liquid. Stir in all the remaining ingredients, except the nuts and spring onions, and cover. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 20-30 minutes, or until meat and rice are cooked and tender, stirring three or four times during cooking.
3 Garnish and serve at once.

Parsnips, swedes, turnips

Treat yourself to fresh-tasting, full-flavoured root vegetables. Microwave-cooked turnips, parsnips and swedes are easy, speedy and perfect-tasting every time.

Parsnips, swedes and turnips are ideal candidates for the microwave as they can be cooked in a fraction of the conventional time. Moreover, because the minimum of water is needed — a mere 45ml / 3tbls per 450g / 1lb vegetables — all the flavour and goodness are retained.

Turnips and parsnips can be cooked whole, sliced or cubed. But swedes, which are larger — generally over 450g / 1lb — should be sliced or cubed. Top and tail each vegetable just before using. Remove the woody core from large parsnips.

Arrange the vegetables in a large, shallow casserole with the thinnest parts to the centre and rearrange during cooking. If the vegetables are intended as an accompaniment, they should be only just tender after microwaving and before standing. If to be mashed, a little extra time may be allowed so they are definitely soft. Because these vegetables are fairly dense in texture, standing time is necessary to complete the cooking process; this is particularly important with whole vegetables. Allow 450g / 1lb vegetables to serve three or four as an accompaniment.

Root Vegetable Casserole

RAY DUNS

Choosing parsnips, swedes and turnips

Choose firm vegetables. Small-to-medium-sized parsnips and turnips are best; large ones tend to be woody. Turnips may have greenish tops, but parsnips should be clean and crisp with no soft patches. Swedes should be heavy for their size. Store in polythene bags in the crisper compartment of the refrigerator or a cool, dark place for 1-2 weeks.

Root vegetable casserole

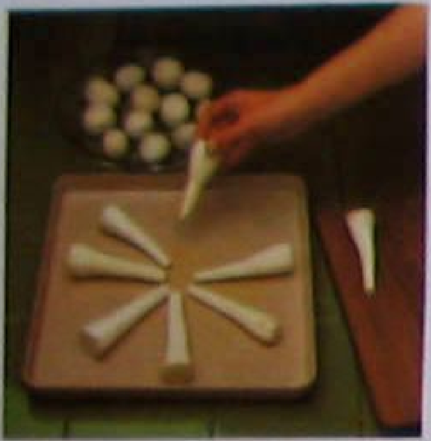
22 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

There is no need to thicken the juices of this casserole as the starchy vegetables do this themselves during cooking.

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
1 large onion, finely sliced
1 vegetable stock cube
275ml / ½pt boiling water

How to microwave whole parsnips and turnips



Top and tail *450g / 1lb parsnips or turnips; peel or prick with a fork. Arrange in a shallow dish; space out turnips evenly and place parsnips with pointed ends to the centre.*

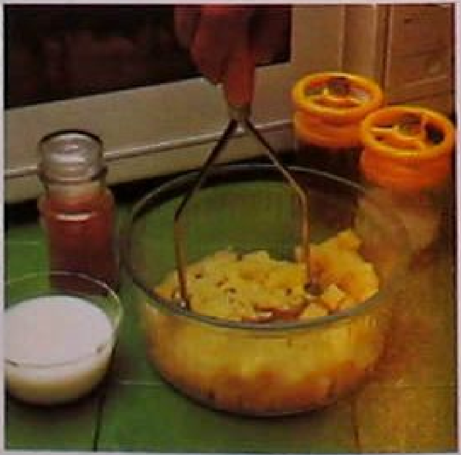
Add *45ml / 3tbls water. Dot with 15g / ½oz butter if liked. Sprinkle 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice over parsnips; cover. Microwave for minimum time (see chart, opposite), rearranging once.*

Test *for tenderness by inserting a skewer or the point of a knife into the thickest part — it should be just tender. Let stand for 3 minutes to tenderize completely before serving.*

How to microwave swedes

Slice *top off a swede weighing about 700g / 1½lb; peel, then cut away any blemishes. Cut into 12mm / ½in cubes and place in a bowl together with 45ml / 3tbls water. Add 15g / ½oz butter or margarine if wished.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for recommended time (see chart, opposite), until tender, stirring twice during cooking. Let stand, covered, for 4 minutes to complete cooking. Swede should be very tender.*



To serve, *drain and season, or mash with 25g / 1oz butter and salt and pepper to taste. If liked, add a little warmed milk or single cream and a pinch of ground nutmeg, mace or cinnamon to taste.*

2 leeks (total weight 225g / 8oz), cut into 2.5cm / 1in slices
2 turnips (total weight 225g / 8oz), cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
2-3 parsnips (total weight 225g / 8oz), cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
3-4 carrots (total weight 225g / 8oz), cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper

TOPPING
45ml / 3tbls dried brown or white breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls grated Cheddar cheese

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter or margarine and onion in a casserole. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Set aside.

2 Dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water and add to the onion mixture together with the leeks. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in the turnips, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.

3 Add the parsnips, carrots and herbs. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 12-16 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring two or three times. Let stand, covered, for 3 minutes.

4 Uncover and season to taste. Sprinkle over the breadcrumbs and cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until the cheese melts. Serve immediately.

Parsnips with pineapple

13 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

This is a slightly unusual way to serve plainly cooked parsnips and makes a particularly good accompaniment to gammon or pork.

450g / 1lb parsnips, cut into matchstick strips
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
90ml / 6tbls water
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour

Times for parsnips, swedes and turnips

VEGETABLE	QUANTITY*	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	STANDING TIME
Parsnips			
Whole (4 even-sized)	450g / 1lb	9-12 mins	3 mins
Slices (6mm / ¼in)	450g / 1lb	9-12 mins	3 mins
Cubes (12mm / ½in)	450g / 1lb	9-12 mins	3 mins
Turnips			
Whole (4 even-sized)	450g / 1lb	14-16 mins	3 mins
Slices (6mm / ¼in)	450g / 1lb	11-12 mins	3 mins
Cubes (12mm / ½in)	450g / 1lb	12-14 mins	3 mins
Swedes			
Slices (6mm / ¼in)	700g / 1½lb	10-12 mins	4 mins
Cubes (12mm / ½in)	700g / 1½lb	11-14 mins	4 mins

*Quantities given serve 3-4 as a vegetable accompaniment

Parsnips with Pineapple

376g / 13¼oz can crushed pineapple in syrup
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
salt

SERVES 4

1 Place the parsnips in a bowl with butter and half the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes; stir twice. Set aside.

2 Mix the sugar and cornflour in a bowl. Slowly blend in the remaining water. Stir in the pineapple and syrup, zest and salt.

3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until thickened; stir after 3 minutes, then every minute.

4 Drain the parsnips. Spoon over the pineapple mixture and serve.

Microtips

When microwaving parsnips or turnips as a plain accompaniment, add 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice to help keep their white colour.

Citrus-glazed turnips

12¼ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz demerara sugar
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
450g / 1lb turnips, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter or margarine in a dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds.
2 Stir in remaining ingredients arranging turnips in a circle. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, stirring twice. Let stand for 3 minutes.

Swede and carrot mould

25¼ mins

Standing time: 4 mins

450g / 1lb swede, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
450g / 1lb carrots, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
1 small onion, chopped
150ml / ¼pt water
salt and pepper
40g / 1½oz butter
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
2 egg yolks, beaten
30ml / 2tbls chopped mixed herbs

SERVES 6

1 Put the swede, carrot, onion and water in a casserole. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes until very tender, stirring twice. Stand 4 minutes.
2 Drain, then mash with salt, pepper and 25g / 1oz of the butter. Stir in the crumbs and yolks.
3 Put the remaining butter in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Brush over the inside of the bowl. Spoon in half the mashed swede and press down firmly. Scatter over the herbs. Add the remaining swede, pressing it down well.
4 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Turn out carefully on to a plate and serve.

RAY DUNS

Roast Beef with Parsnips

Roast beef with parsnips

33 mins

Standing time: 18 mins

A simple but delicious roast dinner. While the beef is standing, microwave the parsnips and gravy. The time given for the beef will produce medium-rare meat.

1.1kg / 1½lb topside of beef
450g / 1lb parsnips, peeled
50g / 2oz demerara sugar
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Wipe the joint and place on a roasting rack set over a dish. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 22-25 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 15-20 minutes.
2 Meanwhile arrange the parsnips in a dish. Sprinkle with the sugar, lemon juice and zest. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes, turning and basting with the juices twice. Let stand, covered, for 3 minutes.
3 Lift the beef from the rack and place on a serving dish. Pour the juices into a jug, spoon off fat and make up to 275ml / ½pt with water (or stock) if necessary. Blend the cornflour with a little of the juice mixture, then stir in the rest. Add a few drops of gravy colouring if liked. Return to the jug and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until thickened, stirring after 1 minute, then every 30 seconds. Season to taste and serve with the beef and parsnips.

Cooking in parcels

The microwave is not only excellent for making family meals; these elegant parcels will grace any dinner party table. Both sweet and savoury ingredients make delicious parcel food.

Parcel cookery or cooking *en papillote* (literally 'in an envelope') is a useful and flavoursome way of cooking small quantities of food in the microwave. The principle is to tightly enclose food sealing in all the goodness, juices and flavour.

Parcel cookery works very well in the microwave. It stops small pieces of food from drying out — and also solves the problem of the right-sized container. The parcels can be arranged on a plate, or simply placed in the microwave. If you do place them straight in the microwave, make especially sure they are securely closed to avoid leaking.

Non-edible wrappings

With the obvious exception of foil, there are several choices of wrapping that all work well in the microwave. Greaseproof or non-stick baking paper are the first choice for attractive presentation but thick paper bags, boiling bags or oven or roasting bags can also be used.

If you are using a boiling bag, oven or roasting bag, pierce in several places so that any build-up of hot air or steam can escape.

Edible wrappings

All types of large edible leaves can be used: spinach, different kinds of Chinese greens, lettuce, cabbage and spring greens. Select large, even-shaped leaves without blemishes, cut away centre core or stalk and microwave for a few minutes until pliable. Wrap around the filling and secure with a wooden cocktail stick or string.

Tarragon Salmon Parcels

DAVE KING

Do

- Brush greaseproof paper shapes with melted butter or oil to stop food from sticking.
- Fold the edges down tightly or secure with string, rubber bands or adhesive tape.
- Cut the shapes at least three times larger than the food.

Don't

- Use metal ties to secure the parcels.
- Use foil as a wrapping.
- Over-cook leaves for wrapping, they should be just pliable enough to wrap around the filling without cracking.
- Grease edible wrappers.

Gingered figs

1½ mins

Standing time: none

Serve accompanied by a bowl of thick Greek yoghurt.

4 fresh green figs
maple syrup for brushing
15ml / 1tbls chopped flaked almonds
1 small piece of preserved ginger, finely chopped

SERVES 4

1 Make two cuts, in a cross shape, in the top of each fig. Squeeze the base gently so the fruit opens out like a flower.

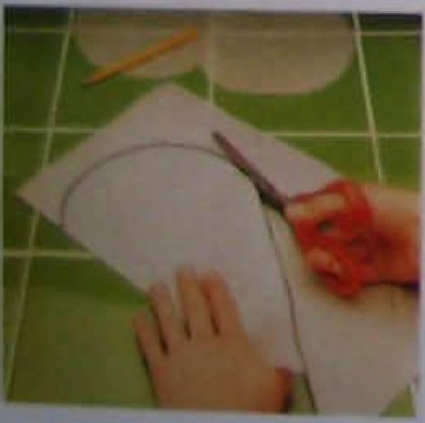
2 Cut four 19cm / 7½in squares of greaseproof paper and lay them on the floor or turntable of the microwave. Place a fig in the centre of each square and brush the outside of each with a little syrup. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 45 seconds.

3 Divide the almonds and ginger into four equal portions and sprinkle into the centre of the figs. Gather up the sides of the paper squares and twist the tops to form money bag shapes.

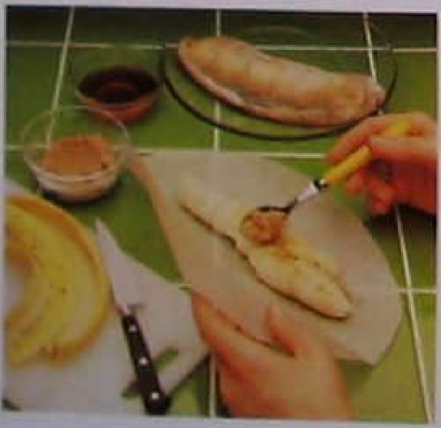
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until the figs are softened and the juices start to run. Serve at once with yoghurt.

Gingered Figs

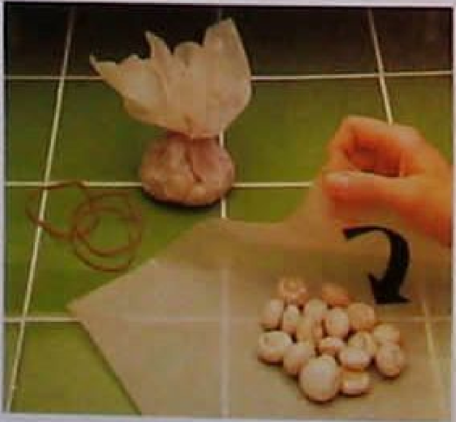
Step-by-step to parcel shapes



Semi-heart: *cut a heart shape and grease lightly. Place the food on one half. Fold other half over, giving edges double fold to seal.*



Turnover: *cut an oval shape and grease lightly. Place food on one half and fold the other half over. Fold the edges twice to seal.*



Money bag: *cut a square and grease lightly. Place food in centre and gently pull up edges. Twist or tie top like a money bag.*

Vegetables en papillote

4 mins

Standing time: none

Offer individual servings of vegetables for guests to open at the table.

melted butter or oil for greasing
100g / 4oz bean sprouts
6 spring onions, chopped
1 small red pepper, seeded and sliced
100g / 4oz courgettes, sliced
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped ginger

SERVES 4

1 Cut four squares of greaseproof paper and brush lightly with melted butter or oil.

2 Combine the prepared vegetables and seasonings, then pile a quarter of the vegetables in the middle of each paper square.

3 Either fold the paper over the vegetables or pull up the edges like a money bag. Microwave parcels at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, depending on how crisp you prefer your vegetables.

Cabbage and caraway parcels: remove the core from a white or green cabbage and very thinly slice 450g / 1lb. Combine with 5ml / 1tsp caraway seeds, 30ml / 2tbls sultanas and juice of ½ lemon. Proceed as above and serve with soured cream.

Mushroom medley: combine 100g / 4oz sliced mushrooms, 100g / 4oz sliced cherry tomatoes, 100g / 4oz small broccoli florets, 100g / 4oz very thinly sliced carrots and 15ml / 1tbls chopped mixed herbs. Proceed as above.

Cook's notes

When making mixed vegetable parcels, cut slow-cooking carrots or potatoes into very thin slices or small pieces. This ensures they cook through in the same time as quick-cooking vegetables like peppers.

Vegetables en Papillote

Tarragon salmon parcels

5 mins

Standing time: none

4 salmon steaks*, about 100g / 4oz each
melted butter or oil for greasing
8 sprigs fresh tarragon or 10ml / 2tsp dried
juice of ½ lemon
¼ cucumber, thinly sliced

SERVES 4

1 Remove the bones and skin from the salmon steaks. Cut four heart shapes out of greaseproof paper and brush with melted butter or oil and place a steak in the centre of one half of each.

2 Top each steak with two sprigs or a little dried tarragon, a squeeze of lemon juice and three cucumber slices. Enclose the salmon in the greaseproof paper hearts and fold down the edges.

3 Place the parcels on a plate or in a shallow dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until the salmon flesh flakes easily. Rearrange once. Serve hot or cold.

Tarragon salmon parcels for two: halve the ingredients and microwave the parcels for 2-2½ minutes.

Tarragon salmon parcel for one: cook one prepared salmon steak and garnish in a parcel for 1-1½ minutes.

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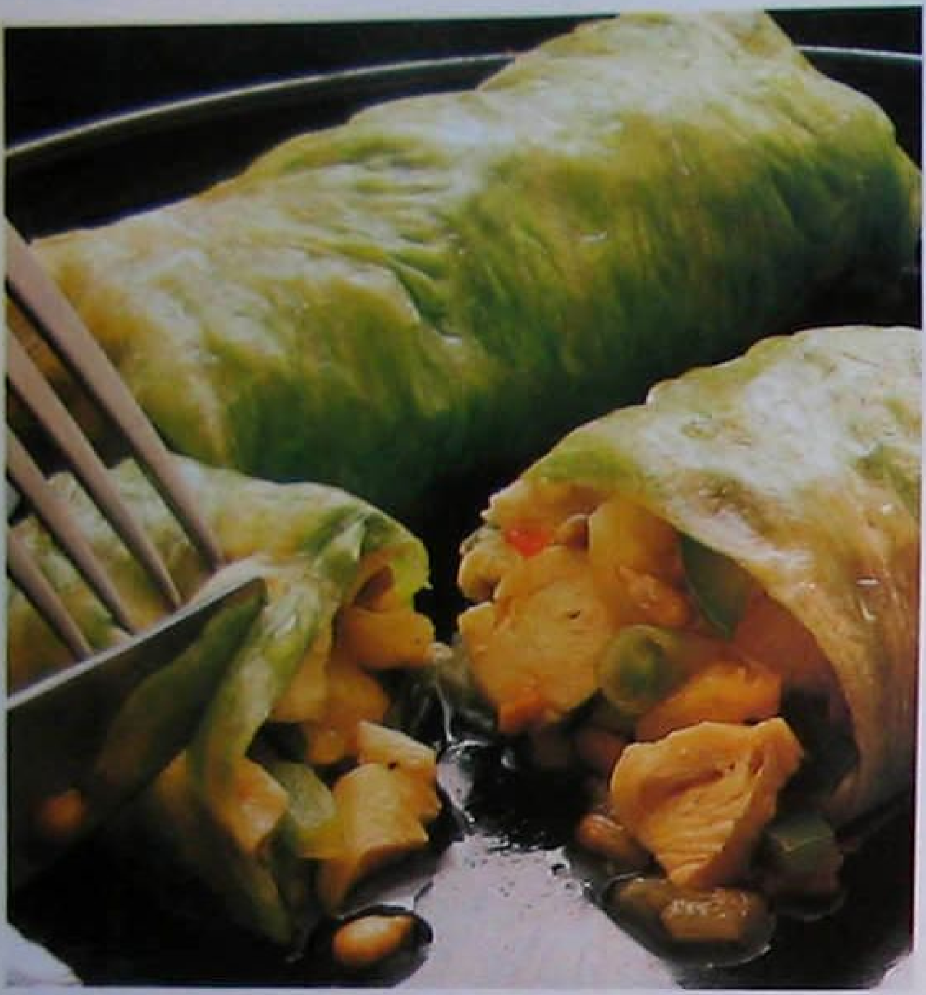
*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Substitute small folded or rolled fillets of John Dorey, jew fish or snapper for salmon steaks.

Cook's notes

Removing the central bone is not essential, but it does reduce the tendency of the fish to 'pop' during cooking.



Oriental Chicken Rolls

Oriental chicken rolls

7 mins

Standing time: none

Serve these crunchy lettuce-leaf rolls with cooked rice and extra sweet and sour sauce, if wished.

8 large, crisp lettuce leaves
380g / 13¼oz can crushed pineapple, well drained
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
4 spring onions, trimmed and chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp five spice powder
350g / 12oz cooked chicken meat, diced
30ml / 2tbls sunflower seeds
15ml / 1tbls bottled sweet and sour sauce

SERVES 4

1 Place the lettuce leaves on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds or until slightly softened. Set aside to cool.
2 Mix the pineapple, green pepper and onions together in a bowl. Stir in the five spice powder. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4½-5½ minutes, or until the pepper and onion are tender. Drain off any liquid.
3 Stir in the chicken, sunflower seeds and sweet and sour sauce. Divide the mixture between the lettuce leaves, fold the leaves in at the side then roll around the filling and secure with wooden cocktail sticks.
4 Place the rolls in a shallow dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until well heated through. Serve immediately with plain boiled or fried rice.

Slimmer's notes

These are tasty and succulent lunch time or supper snacks which have only 200 Cal / 840 kJ per portion. Serve with a crisp salad.

Shredded beef cabbage rolls

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

These cabbage rolls make an unusual dinner party dish. Serve them with sliced potatoes in their skins or with boiled or fried rice, oriental-style.

1 white or green cabbage

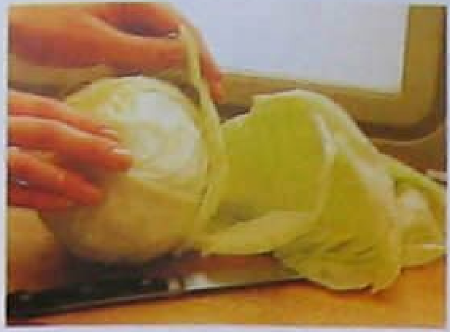
FILLING
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
1 large carrot, grated
1 garlic clove, chopped
225g / 8oz cooked beef, cut into thin strips
397g / 14oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried rosemary
salt and pepper

SAUCE
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
425ml / ¾pt tomato juice
30ml / 2tbls soft dark brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp beef or vegetable extract
10ml / 2tsp white wine or cider vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil

SERVES 4

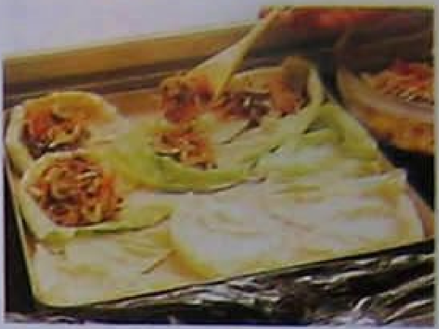
1 Prepare the cabbage casing and filling following the steps opposite.
2 Fold in the sides of the leaves, then roll up and secure each cabbage parcel with a wooden cocktail stick. Place seam side down in a shallow baking dish.
3 Make the sauce: put the onion and olive oil into a bowl. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the onion is tender. Stir in the remaining sauce ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-12 minutes, or until slightly thickened, stirring three times.
4 Pour the sauce over the cabbage parcels, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until the parcels and filling are hot, rotating the dish once. Stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

How to prepare and fill Shredded beef cabbage rolls

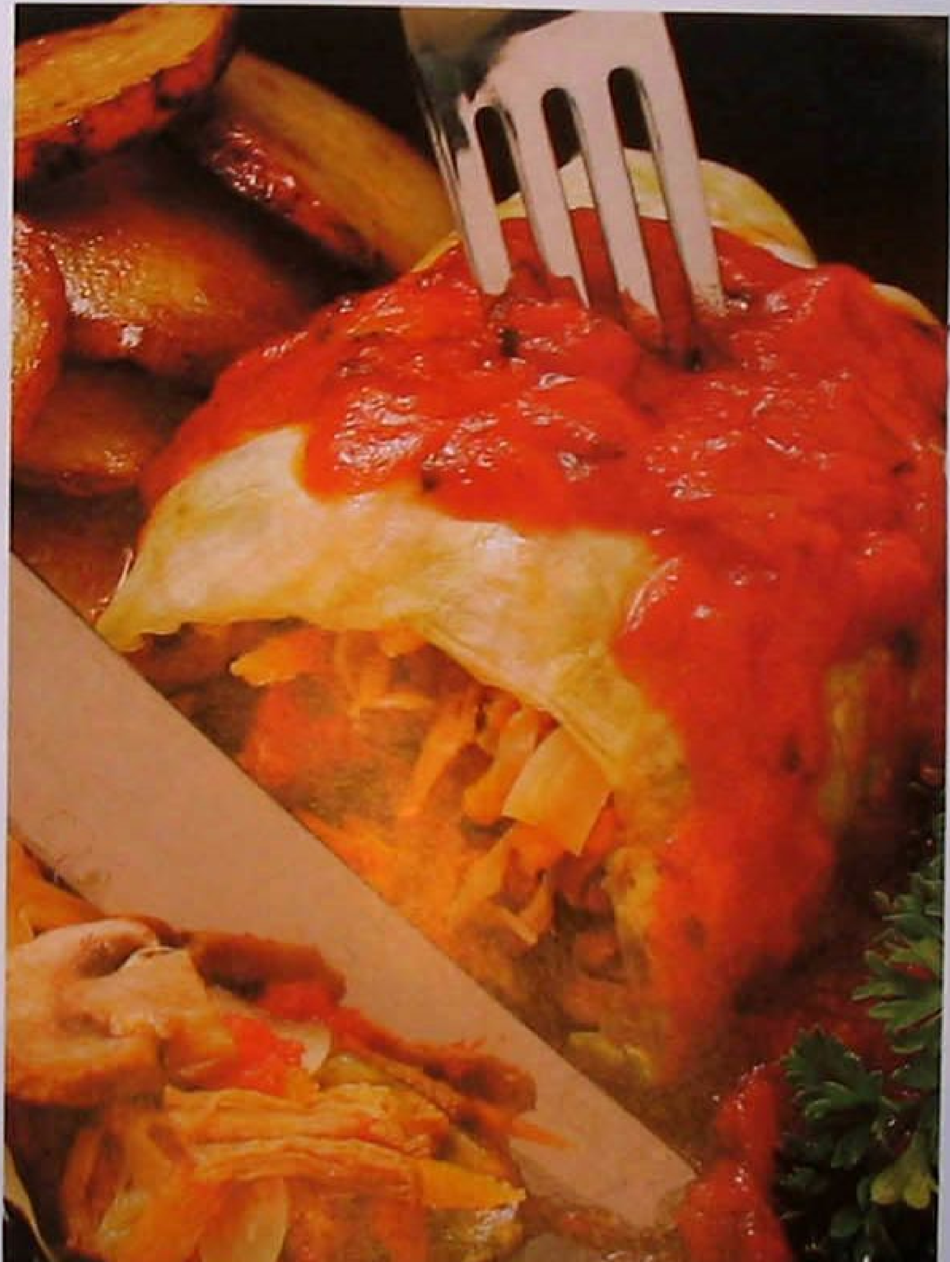


Cut *the hard centre core from the cabbage. Wrap the cabbage in cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3½ minutes, or until eight outer leaves can be easily removed. Remove centre rib from each leaf.*

Shred *100g / 4oz of remaining cabbage. Microwave cabbage, mushrooms, onion, carrot and garlic in a large, covered bowl at 100% (High) for 3-6 minutes or until tender; stir once. Drain if necessary.*



Stir *in remaining filling ingredients. Put leaves on a microwave baking sheet, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-4½ minutes, until the leaves are pliable. Spoon the filling into the centre of each leaf.*



Banana boats

3 mins

Standing time: none

Eat the bananas straight from the skins with a spoon.

4 even-sized, ripe bananas
25g / 1oz butter, cut into small pieces
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar

SERVES 4

1 Make a slit down the length of each of the bananas, without cutting right through. Open them out a little.

2 Divide butter and sugar between bananas, pushing them right down into the cuts. Press the banana back into shape.

3 Place the bananas in a shallow dish with the slits uppermost. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until the skin starts to blacken and the banana flesh is soft and becoming translucent. Serve the bananas at once, in their skins, with cream if liked.

VARIATIONS

Other ingredients can be added to the filling, such as finely chopped nuts, dried fruit, honey, grated chocolate, or a sprinkling of alcohol and/or lemon juice. Do not over-fill the bananas or the skins might split open.

Microwaving nuts: 1

Toasted, ground, shelled, chopped or flaked — nuts are really versatile. Microwaved for stuffings, cakes and coatings, mixed into a pâté or adding crunch to a salad — you'll go nuts about them.

Fresh nuts eaten straight from their shells are a real treat and you can use your microwave to help you remove them from their shells (without breaking them up with the nutcrackers), and to blanch, skin or toast. Nuts can be used in a variety of ways.

Buy fresh nuts in their shells from a greengrocer or large supermarket. Nuts with a hard, thick shell will store for up to three months in a cool, dry place. Thinner, shelled nuts, such as hazelnuts, should be eaten within a week of purchase. Shelled nuts will keep for up to two months if they are stored in an airtight container.

Almonds: sweet almonds are very popular, especially for cooking. Buy them whole, in their skins, blanched, flaked or chopped.

Brazil nuts: this oval nut is sold whole or shelled and is good eaten on its own or chopped and included as an ingredient.

Hazelnuts: also known as Filberts, they are rich in oil and are good on their own or as an ingredient.

Macadamia: these nuts are native to Australia and although usually eaten as a 'nibble' can be included as an ingredient.

Pecans: indigenous to North America and thus best known when used in the traditional Pecan Pie, see recipe, page 843.

Walnuts: these are used extensively in sweet and savoury dishes or eaten on their own.

Hazelnut Gateau

Hazelnut gateau

3½ mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

This sophisticated gateau will finish a dinner party off with style. Or if you prefer, serve as part of a very special tea party. Eat the cake on the day it is made.

3 eggs
75g / 3oz sugar
90ml / 6tbls plain flour
60ml / 4tbls ground hazelnuts
40g / 1½oz butter, melted
60ml / 4tbls apricot jam
150ml / ¼pt double cream, whipped
200g / 7oz chocolate and hazelnut spread
45-60ml / 3-4tbls chopped hazelnuts
50g / 2oz whole hazelnuts, to decorate

SERVES 6-8

1 Line a 20 × 10cm / 8 × 4in loaf dish with cling film.

2 Whisk the eggs and sugar together until very thick and creamy.

3 Sieve the flour then stir well into the ground hazelnuts. Gently fold the flour and nut mixture and melted butter alternately into the whisked egg mixture until it is all incorporated.

4 Pour the mixture into the loaf dish and carefully smooth the top. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes or until springy to the touch and an inserted cocktail stick comes out clean.

5 Leave to stand for 5-10 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

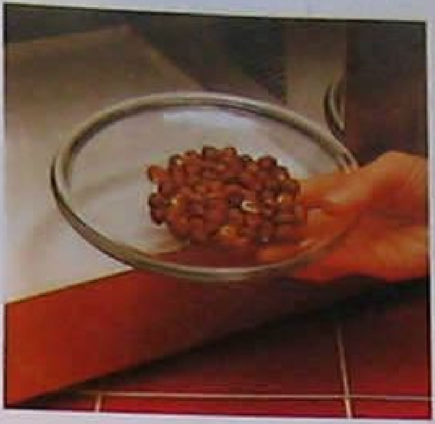
6 Slice the cake in half horizontally. Spread both cut sides with the apricot jam and then sandwich together with the whipped, double cream.

7 Warm the chocolate and hazelnut spread for 30 seconds at 100% (High) and spread over the top and sides of the cake, using a palette knife.

8 Using a clean palette knife press the chopped hazelnuts around the sides of the cake. Decorate the top of the gateau with whole, skinned hazelnuts.

How to toast and skin hazelnuts

RAY DUNS



Spread *45ml / 3tbls hazelnut kernels on a flat plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, uncovered. Give the dish a gentle shake two or three times during microwaving to rearrange the nuts.*

Place *the hazelnuts in a clean cloth and rub thoroughly to remove the skins. The skins should flake off easily. If any nuts remain unskinned, microwave with a glass of water in the cooker for 15-20 seconds.*

How to blanch and toast almonds

To blanch almonds: *pour 225g / 8fl oz boiling water over 100g / 4oz whole almonds in their skins. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1 minute; drain. Squeeze the nuts between your fingers: they should pop out of their skins. Spread the nuts on absorbent paper and leave to dry, then use them as required.*

To toast almonds: *melt 15g / ½oz butter in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 10-20 seconds. Stir in 45ml / 3tbls flaked or slivered almonds, or 50g / 2oz whole, blanched almonds. Microwave at 100% (High): 3-5 minutes if flaked or slivered and 4-5 minutes if whole. Stir every minute until light brown. Stand 5 minutes.*

Nut vol-au-vent

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Vol-au-vent cases cannot be cooked or reheated successfully in the microwave, so buy frozen cases and cook them conventionally.

8 cooked vol-au-vent cases
parsley sprigs to garnish

FILLING
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
15g / ½oz butter
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
425ml / ¾pt chicken stock
125ml / 4fl oz creamy milk
30ml / 2tbls canned pimiento, chopped
pinch of caster sugar
pinch of salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika
400g / 14oz can artichoke hearts, drained and each heart quartered
450g / 1lb cooked chicken meat, chopped

SERVES 4

1 Prepare the filling, see steps below.

2 Spoon the filling into the hot vol-au-vent cases; serve any remaining mixture on the side. Garnish with parsley sprigs.

How to microwave Nut vol-au-vent filling

Toast *the almonds with the butter at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes, then drain. Blend the flour with 150ml / ¼pt stock, then stir in remaining stock, the milk, chopped pimiento, sugar, salt and paprika until well blended.*

Microwave *sauce, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 minutes, until thick, stirring every 2 minutes. Add artichokes, chicken and almonds. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until well heated through. Assemble in cases as directed.*

Microtips

To help you remove nuts whole from their shells after cracking, place 225g / 8oz unshelled walnuts, brazils, almonds, hazelnuts or pecans (or a mixture) in a large bowl. Add 225ml / 8floz water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until water boils. Leave to stand for 1 minute, then drain. Spread the nuts out on absorbent paper to cool. Use nutcrackers to crack the shells and remove the nuts. Take care as the shells may contain hot water which will splash out when the shells are cracked. Use whole, shelled nuts as an attractive garnish or decoration for a variety of foods.

Party Cheese Pâté

Party cheese pâté

1½ mins

Standing time: none

¼ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
2 spring onions, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp butter or margarine
225g / 8oz cream cheese
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz blue cheese, crumbled
15ml / 1tbls canned pimiento, chopped
10ml / 2tsp creamed horseradish
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed
50g / 2oz pecans or walnuts, coarsely chopped

SERVES 10-12

1 Microwave pepper, onions and butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir once.

2 Place the cream cheese in a large bowl and microwave for 1-1½ minutes at 50% (Medium) until soft. Beat well, then stir in the vegetables and remaining ingredients except the nuts.

3 Spoon the mixture in a mound on to a sheet of cling film and wrap, shaping it into a ball. Chill for 2-3 hours until firm.

4 Roll the cheese in the nuts then wrap and chill until needed.

Tipsy almond chicken

14¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75g / 3oz butter
60ml / 4tbls breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls ground almonds
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives
5ml / 1tsp paprika
4 skinned chicken breasts, about 100g / 4oz each
almonds (see Cook's notes), to garnish

SAUCE
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt milk
30ml / 2tbls sherry
pinch of nutmeg

SERVES 4

1 Melt 50g / 2oz butter in a covered shallow dish at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds.

2 Mix together the breadcrumbs, ground almonds, Parmesan cheese, snipped chives and paprika on a large plate. Dip the chicken breasts in the melted butter, then into the crumb mixture to coat all over.

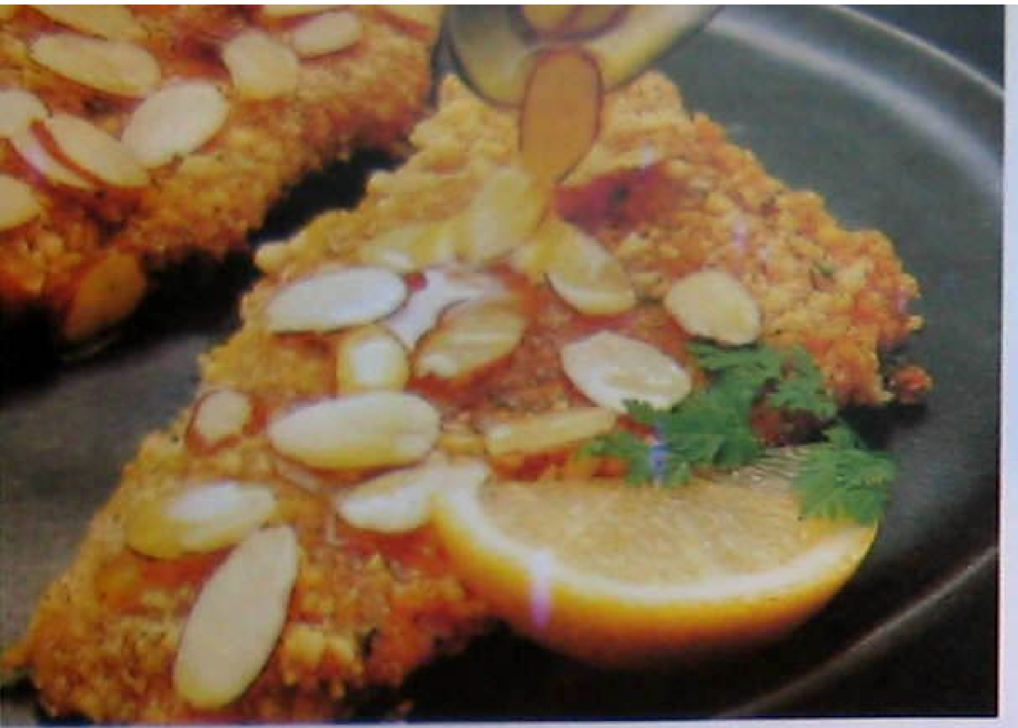
3 Place on a roasting rack in a shallow dish and cover loosely with cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-14 minutes or until the chicken is no longer pink inside; rearrange once, but do not turn over. Let stand, covered loosely with foil, for 5 minutes to cook through.

4 Melt the remaining butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the flour and seasoning, then blend in the milk and sherry. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the sauce is thickened, stirring after 2 minutes.

5 Stir in nutmeg to taste then serve the sauce over the chicken and garnish with sliced or chopped almonds.

Cook's notes

Whole, unblanched almonds make an attractive garnish. The skin adds extra colour as well as flavour. Use a very sharp knife and either slice the almonds lengthways at a slight angle or chop them roughly. Store them in an airtight container and keep them to hand as a useful garnish for savoury dishes or desserts such as cold soufflés.



Fish almondine

7¾ mins

Standing time: 4 mins

75-100g / 3-4oz flaked almonds, toasted and finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls dried seasoned breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp paprika
grated zest of ½ lemon
a pinch of salt
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
1 egg
450g / 1lb white fish fillets, cut into 4 equal portions

SAUCE
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
pinch of pepper

SERVES 4

1 On a plate, mix together the almonds, breadcrumbs, parsley, paprika, lemon zest and salt.
2 Melt the butter or margarine in a covered shallow dish at 100% (High) for 15-20 seconds. Cool slightly, then beat in the egg.
3 Dip the fish fillets in the egg and butter, then in the almond crumb mixture, to coat. Place the fish on a plate with the thickest parts to the outside.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, rearranging once. Uncover and rearrange the fish, then microwave for 2 more minutes or until the flesh flakes easily when tested with a fork. Stand for 4 minutes, covered.

Fish Almondine

5 Meanwhile, make the sauce: melt the butter in a covered shallow dish at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the flaked almonds and pepper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until the almonds are light golden, stirring four times.

Spiced nuts

2¼ mins

Standing time: none

These nuts make a 'moreish' pre-dinner 'nibble'.

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp cayenne pepper
200g / 7oz brazil nuts

MAKES ABOUT 225g / 8oz

1 Melt the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, garlic salt and the cayenne pepper.
2 Add the nuts and stir until coated. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes or until the butter is absorbed, stirring once.
3 Spread the nuts out on absorbent paper to dry. Store in an airtight container.

Chicken with nutty stuffing

36¾ mins

Standing time: 20-25 mins

1.4-1.6kg / 3-3½lb oven-ready roasting chicken

STUFFING
100g / 4oz long-grain white rice
275ml / ½pt boiling water
a pinch salt
small knob of butter or margarine
2 large oranges
2-3 large lettuce leaves, chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped brazil nuts
15ml / 1tbls chopped walnuts or brazil nuts
2.5ml / ½tsp onion salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground allspice

GLAZE
7.5ml / 1½tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls soft dark brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls sherry
2.5ml / ½tsp soy sauce

SERVES 4

1 Combine rice, boiling water, a pinch of salt and the butter in a

large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 12 minutes, stirring twice. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes then fluff with a fork.

2 Grate the zest from one orange into a bowl and squeeze the juice into a second bowl and reserve for the glaze. Peel, segment and chop the remaining orange.

3 Add the orange zest and segments to the rice with lettuce, nuts, onion salt and allspice.

4 Stuff the chicken and secure the neck opening with a wooden cocktail stick. Place on a roasting rack in a shallow dish.

5 Blend the cornflour with the orange juice, then stir in the brown sugar, sherry and soy sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) 45-60 seconds, until thick, stirring once. Brush the glaze over the chicken.

6 Cover loosely with cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 21-28 minutes. Test to see if the juices run clear.

7 Cover the chicken with foil and leave to stand for 15-20 minutes before serving.

Chicken with Nutty Stuffing

Rich Nut Pie

Rich nut pie

13¾ mins

Standing time: none

3 eggs
1 cooked 23cm / 9in pastry case, (see page 370)
100g / 4oz demerara or soft brown sugar
272ml / ½pt corn, maple or golden syrup
25g / 1oz butter or margarine, melted
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
75-100g / 3-4oz pecans, brazil nuts or walnuts, coarsely broken

SERVES 8

1 Separate one of the eggs, beat the yolk and use to brush the inside of the pastry case. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until the yolk is set.

2 Beat the remaining eggs and egg white with any leftover beaten yolk in a large bowl. Add the remaining ingredients except the pecans and mix together thoroughly. Stir in the pecans.

3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes. Pour into the pastry case.

4 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 9 minutes or until the filling is almost set. Rotate the dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Serve hot or cold with whipped cream.

Cook's notes

Brushing the cooked pastry case with beaten egg yolk and then microwaving will ensure there is a good seal and the pastry will not become soggy when the syrup is added.

STAR RECIPE

Duckling à l'orange

Succulent roast duckling, served with tangy orange sauce and a selection of beautifully-cooked vegetables, makes the most tempting special-occasion dish that cooks to perfection, microwave-style.

Ducks are easily available and oven-ready birds are sold cleaned and prepared for cooking. These are available fresh, chilled or frozen. The giblets are often sold with the bird and can be used to make stock, if liked. Remember that a frozen bird must be completely thawed before cooking, so follow the instructions given on the wrapper.

Because duck is a fatty bird, the skin should be pricked all over with a fork or fine skewer before cooking to allow the fat to run out during cooking. To test that the duck is cooked, insert a skewer through the thickest part of the leg, nearest the breast: the juices should run clear. If juices are still pink, microwave for a few minutes longer before testing again.

Roast duck is traditionally served with a tangy fruit sauce or stuffing, new potatoes (when available) and peas, but courgettes, leeks or broccoli also make delicious alternatives.

Duckling à l'Orange

DAVE KING

Duckling à l'orange

32½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 quantity Orange Sauce (see recipe below)
1.8-2.3kg / 4-5lb oven-ready duckling
1 onion, cut into eight wedges
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Orange sauce

3 mins

Standing time: none

1 large orange
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt fresh orange juice
50ml / 2fl oz medium sherry
30ml / 3tbls wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
150ml / ¼pt duck or chicken stock
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Pare off thin strips of peel from the orange and cut into very thin matchstick strips. Halve orange and squeeze the juice into a bowl and blend smoothly with the cornflour. Add the orange strips, orange juice, sherry, vinegar and sugar.

2 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until thickened, stirring twice. Add stock, then taste and add seasoning if necessary.

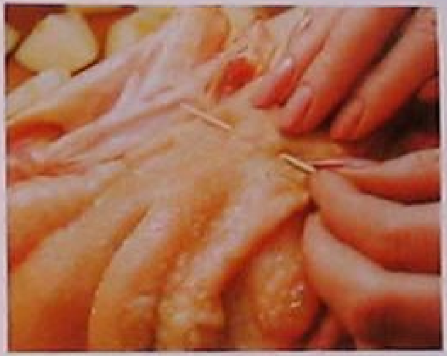
Cook's notes

For a more golden result, brush the surface of the duckling with 5ml / 1tsp soy sauce before microwaving. Alternatively, before standing time, put duckling under a preheated conventional grill for 3-4 minutes until crisp. (Do not leave the duckling unattended as it browns very quickly.)

Although a duck does not have much meat in proportion to its frame, the flesh is rich and succulent so a little goes a long way.

How to microwave Duckling à l'orange

Prepare *the Orange Sauce (see left). Remove the giblets from duckling and reserve for making stock, if liked. Weigh duckling and calculate the cooking time, allowing 7½-9 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Prick the skin all over with a fork or skewer and place the duckling, breast side down, in a roasting dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes of the calculated cooking time. Protecting your hands with rubber gloves, if necessary, then remove the duckling and drain off the fat from the dish.*



Secure *the neck skin to back of duckling with a wooden cocktail stick. Fill the body cavity of the duckling with the onion wedges and add seasoning to taste.*

Return *duckling to roasting dish, breast side down. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for half the remaining cooking time. Drain off fat.*

Turn *duckling breast side up and spoon over one-third of the prepared orange sauce. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for the remaining calculated cooking time. Transfer duckling to a serving platter, cover with a tent of foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, reheat the sauce at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring once. Garnish duckling with watercress and orange slices and serve orange sauce separately. Serve with courgettes and new potatoes, sprinkled with chopped parsley.*

10~minute desserts

A delicious dessert need not be a time-consuming affair as this tempting selection proves. Each one looks good, tastes superb and, what's more, is extremely quick to cook in the microwave.

For many of us a meal simply is not complete without a luscious dessert at the end. However, when time is short, it's the almost-instant type that we rely on — and more often than not it comes straight from a packet! However, with a little microwave magic and imagination, you can treat the family and friends to a luscious selection of homemade desserts that taste wonderful and are easily made and cooked in a matter of minutes.

Clever cooks take advantage of the wide selection of convenience foods now available, including canned fruits and pie fillings, waffles, ice cream, frozen fruit, and yoghurt. Used wisely, these items can provide excellent short cuts to speedy dishes.

Whether it's a creamy fruit syllabub for supper guests, or scoops of ice cream smothered in delicious hot sauce for the family, you'll find a microwave dessert here to please everyone.

Cherry waffles

1½ mins

Standing time: none

400g / 14oz can cherry pie filling
30ml / 2tbls flaked almonds
1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring
4 fresh or frozen dessert waffles, toasted conventionally
75g / 3oz cream cheese, beaten until soft
whipped cream, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Put the cherry pie filling, almonds and almond flavouring in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes or until heated through, stirring once.

2 Spread the hot toasted waffles with the softened cream cheese and top each one with a quarter of the cherry mixture. Serve hot with whipped cream, or ice cream if preferred.

VARIATIONS

Prepare each of the following as instructed in step 1.

Apple spice: use 400g / 14oz can apple pie filling, 30ml / 2tbls sultanas and a pinch of nutmeg.

Blackcurrant delight: use 400g / 14oz can blackcurrant pie filling, the finely grated zest of 1 lemon and a pinch of ground allspice.

Apricot and almond: use 400g / 15oz can apricot pie filling, the finely grated zest of ½ orange and 30ml / 2tbls flaked almonds.

Cherry Waffles

Tangy yoghurt fruit medley

1 min

Standing time: none

227g / 8oz can pineapple chunks, drained and juice reserved
298g / 10½oz can mandarin segments, drained and juice reserved
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 3tsp sugar
150g / 5oz natural yoghurt
100g / 4oz seedless grapes
1 ripe pear, peeled, cored and diced
1 banana, sliced
maraschino cherries (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Put the reserved pineapple juice into a measuring jug and make up to 150ml / ¼pt with the reserved mandarin juice. In a bowl, blend the cornflour smoothly with a little of the juice mixture, then add the rest of the measured juice and the sugar.

2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, whisking well halfway through and at the end of the cooking time, until thickened and smooth. Cool, then stir in yoghurt.

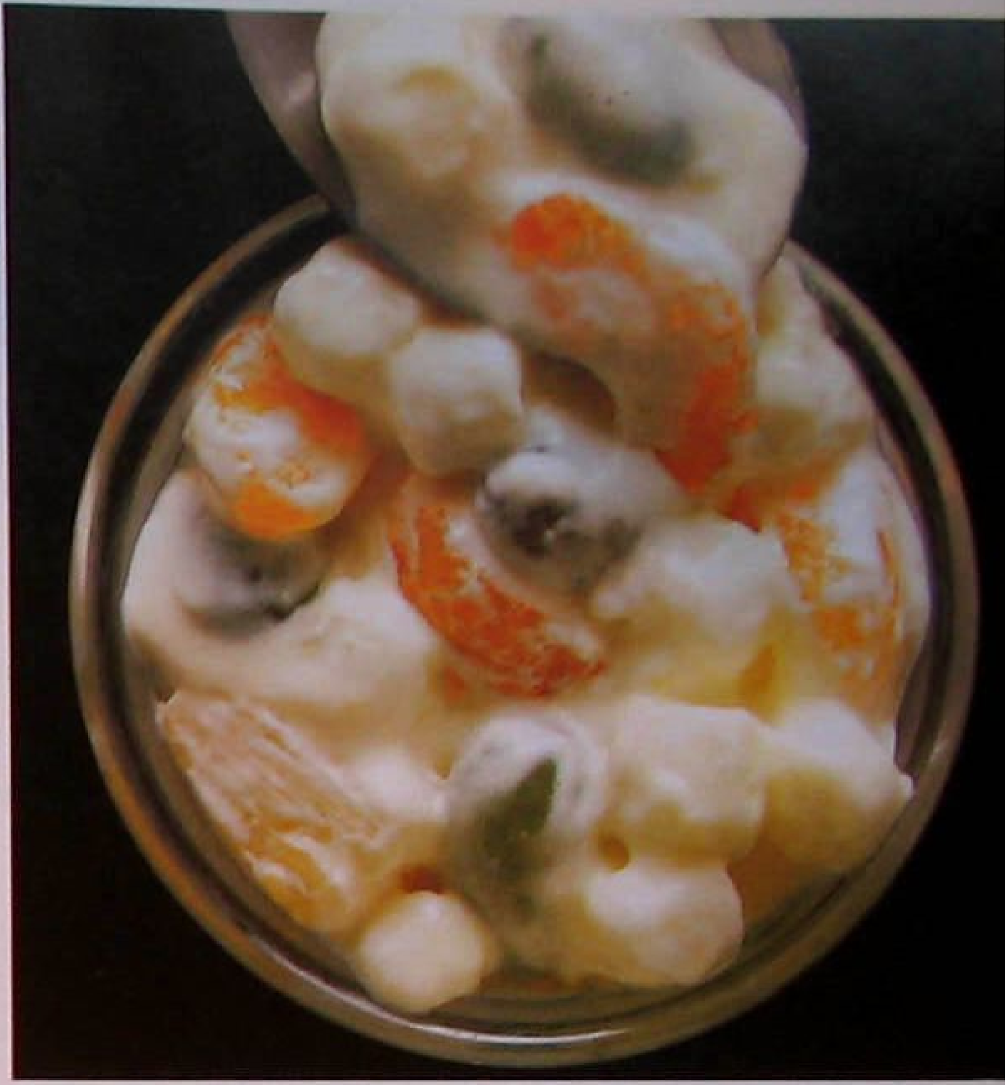
3 Mix all the fruits together in a bowl. Add the yoghurt mixture and gently combine with the fruit until fruits are well coated. Spoon into serving dishes. Decorate each with a maraschino cherry, if using, and serve at once.

Cook's notes

This dessert is also delicious chilled, in which case do not add the pear and banana until just before serving to prevent discoloration. Do not keep mixture for more than 2 hours before serving as the juice and yoghurt may separate and spoil the appearance.

Slimmer's notes

One portion of yoghurt dessert made with canned fruits in natural juice contains 125Cal / 525kJ.



Tangy Yoghurt Fruit Medley

Apple cream cheese crisp

6 mins

Standing time: none

CRUMBLE TOPPING
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz rolled oats
50g / 2oz plain flour, sifted

FILLING
425g / 15oz can apple slices
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp mixed spice
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz cream cheese, at room temperature
1 egg, beaten

SERVES 4

1 Put butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Stir in the brown sugar and rolled oats and mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir in the flour and reserve.

2 Combine the canned apple slices, lemon juice, and 15ml / 1tbls of the sugar in a baking dish. Stir well and spread evenly to cover the base.

3 Beat the cheese with the remaining sugar and beaten egg. Spoon evenly over the apple mixture and sprinkle with the reserved crumble topping.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5½ minutes until the filling is heated through and the topping is crisp, rotating the dish halfway through. Serve hot or cold.

VARIATION
A 425g / 15oz can of plums may be used instead of the apples, if preferred. Remove any stones and drain off most of the juice.

Treacle slice

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Serve this dessert with Cream Cheese Topping, see below, and Orange Sauce (page 257) — which only takes 3 minutes to make in the microwave.

175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
225g / 8oz sugar
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
75g / 3oz butter or margarine, diced
175ml / 6fl oz boiling water
60ml / 4tbls black treacle
7.5ml / 1½tsp bicarbonate of soda

SERVES 8-10

Cream cheese topping

85g / 3oz cream cheese
45ml / 3tbls icing sugar, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla essence
100ml / 4fl oz whipping cream

SERVES 6

1 Beat together the cheese, icing sugar and vanilla essence until smooth.

2 Gradually add the cream, beating constantly until very thick. Serve chilled with Treacle Slice.

How to microwave Treacle slice

Combine *the flour, sugar, nuts and spices in a bowl. Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Spoon half the crumble over base of a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in oblong dish and press down firmly using a palette knife.*

Mix *water with treacle and bicarbonate of soda; blend well. Pour over mixture in dish; sprinkle with remaining crumble. Stand on an inverted saucer and cook at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes; rotate a quarter turn every 2 minutes.*

Cook *at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until firm when pressed with fingertips, giving the dish a quarter turn every minute. Stand for 10 minutes. Cut into squares and serve warm with custard or Cream Cheese Topping and Orange Sauce.*

Blackberry cream syllabubs

4 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz frozen blackberries
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar

SYLLABUB TOPPING
100g / 4oz caster sugar
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
125ml / 4fl oz medium sherry
275ml / ½pt double cream

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the blackberries in a shallow dish and microwave, uncovered, at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-3½ minutes. Rearrange the fruit halfway through cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

2 Sprinkle blackberries with 15m / 1tbls caster sugar and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until the juice begins to run, but the blackberries still retain their shape. Leave to cool.

3 Meanwhile, make the syllabub topping. Put all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk together until softly peaking.

4 Spoon the blackberries into 4-6 serving glasses. Carefully spoon the syllabub mixture over the fruit. Chill, if liked for 15 minutes, or longer if preferred. Decorate with thin curls of lemon peel and lemon-scented geranium leaves, if liked. Serve with crisp biscuits.

VARIATIONS
Frozen raspberries or blackcurrants, or a mixture of the two, may be used instead and give a refreshing, tangy flavour to this creamy dessert. Alternative decorations could be thin lemon or lime slices, or dainty twists of lemon or lime peel.

Microtips

To save time, the blackberries may be cooked from frozen at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes. However blackberries keep their shape better if they are thawed first and then cooked.

RAY DUNS

Speedy dessert sauces

Here are three luscious and almost instant microwave sauce recipes to keep handy for those times when a stylish dessert is needed in a hurry. These sauces are simple to prepare and cook and give the perfect finishing touch to some scoops of ice cream or slices of homemade or bought cake.

Microtips

To warm slices of cake: arrange four slices flat on a plate, cover with a sheet of absorbent paper; microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes.

Speedy choc 'n' peanut sauce

1 min

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz chocolate drops
150ml / 5fl oz milk
100g / 4oz smooth peanut butter

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a measuring jug or bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes or until the chocolate drops are soft.

2 Stir with a rubber spatula until well blended and smooth. Serve warm or cold over ice cream. Sprinkle with chopped nuts, if liked.

Speedy Choc 'n' Peanut Sauce

Speedy choc 'n' peanut sauce for two: halve all the ingredients and microwave at 50% (Medium) for only 45-60 seconds.

Microtips

The cold sauce may be reheated at 50% (Medium) for 45-60 seconds to serve warm.

Cook's notes

For convenience this sauce may be made well in advance and served cold. For a creamy flavour, stir in 15-30ml / 1-2tbls single or double cream just before serving. Crunchy peanut butter may be used, if liked.

Caramel Sauce

Caramel sauce

2½ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz plain caramels
90ml / 6tbls milk

SERVES 4

1 Put the caramels and milk into a 1L / 2pt bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until caramels melt, stirring every 30 seconds to ensure the heat is evenly distributed.

2 Stir well until the mixture is thoroughly combined and smooth. Serve the sauce warm over portions of hot cake or scoops of ice cream, if preferred.

Rum butter sauce

5½ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz caster sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
175ml / 6fl oz milk
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, cut into small pieces
30ml / 2tbls dark rum
good pinch of ground nutmeg

SERVES 4

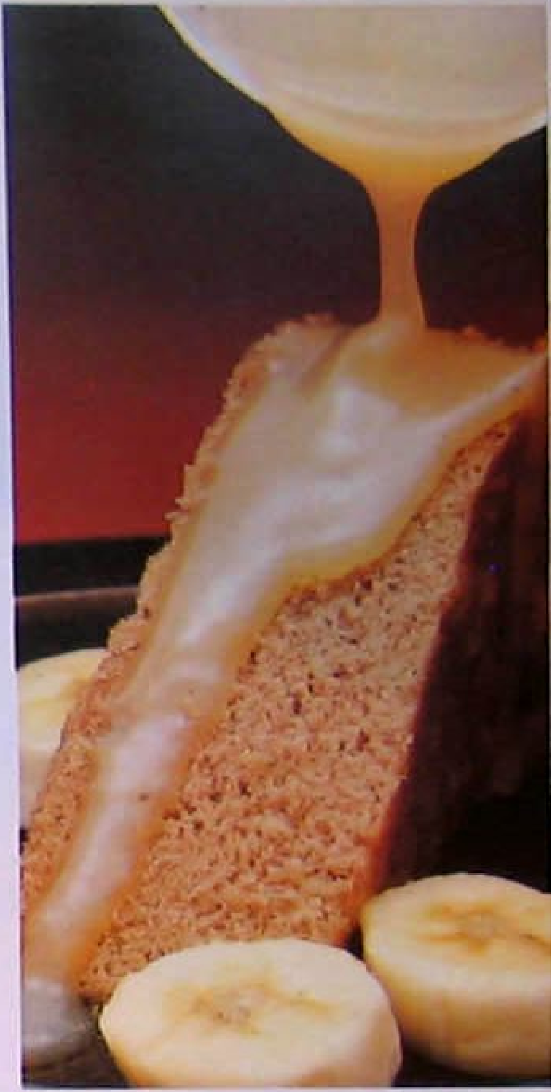
Rum butter sauce for two: halve all the ingredients. Microwave in a 575ml / 1pt bowl for 2 minutes, then for 1½-2 minutes until slightly thickened.

VARIATIONS

Replace the rum with sherry or brandy, and for a tangy flavour add the finely grated zest of 1 small lemon or orange.

Cook's notes

For a special occasion add some raisins to the sauce to serve with ice cream. Soak 30ml / 2tbls raisins in the rum for 1 hour, then add to the sauce at the end of step 2. Heat through at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds.



Rum Butter Sauce

How to microwave Rum butter sauce

Place *the sugar and the cornflour in a medium-sized bowl or casserole; mix together. Add a little of the milk and blend the ingredients together until smooth. Add the remaining milk and stir well to combine. Add the pieces of butter.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until butter melts, stirring twice. Cook for a further 2½-3 minutes until mixture boils hard for 2 minutes and sauce is slightly thickened. Stir in rum and nutmeg. Serve hot over slices of warm cake.*

Casseroled pork chops

Ring the changes with pork chops — use your microwave cooker to casserole them with piquant sauces and rich savoury toppings.

Choose loin or chump pork chops when you want a substantial meal — they're satisfying and tasty and quick to cook. Served plainly grilled or with a sauce (see page 57), they're delicious. However, since pork is a rich meat, with a more robust flavour and texture than other meats, such as lamb or chicken, it is not overwhelmed when cooked with strongly flavoured ingredients. Make the most of this quality by casseroling pork chops with piquant vegetables, spices, fruit and savoury toppings.

Pork chops can dry out if they are over-cooked. Casseroling helps keep them moist and succulent. The extra time involved is minimal — your microwave will take care of that — and will bring relish and variety to your meals. Add a colouring agent or use a browning dish for extra richness.

Chops with Cabbage

Chops with cabbage

25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb green cabbage, cored and shredded
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 onion, or 4 or 5 large spring onions, finely chopped
grated zest and juice of 1 large orange
5ml / 1tsp wine vinegar
4 × 225g / 8oz lean pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
15ml / 1tbls dark chunky marmalade

SERVES 4

1 Combine the cabbage, garlic, onion, orange zest and juice, wine vinegar and sugar in a large casserole.

2 Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking.

3 Arrange the chops on top of the cabbage with the meatiest parts to the outside and brush with the marmalade.

4 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes.

5 Rearrange the chops and stir the cabbage mixture. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-18 minutes, or until meat feels firm and juices run clear if pierced with a knife.

6 Allow to stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

Cook's notes

To make the onion crescents, sift 30ml / 2tbls plain flour into a bowl and stir in 60ml / 4tbls milk. Slice half an onion into rings and cut the rings in half. Dip in the batter, then deep fry in hot oil until crisp and golden. If liked, cut into smaller pieces before scattering over the chops.

Pork chop casserole

28 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

½ × 425g / 15oz can cream of mushroom soup
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary
300g / 10oz frozen peas
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
½ onion, chopped
50g / 2oz quick-cook rice
4 lean pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream
salt and pepper
deep-fried onion crescents, to garnish (see Cook's notes above)

SERVES 4

1 Pour three-quarters of the soup into a large casserole. Add the rosemary, peas, mushrooms, onions and rice.

Pork Chop Casserole

2 Arrange the chops on top with the meatiest parts to the outside. Spoon over remaining soup mixture. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, rearranging halfway through cooking.

3 Reduce power and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes. Turn the chops over and stir the vegetable mixture. Continue microwaving, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes or until the chops are cooked. Stir in the soured cream two minutes before the end of cooking time. Season and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Serve garnished with the deep-fried onion crescents.

Slimmer's notes

Pork chops are not typical slimmer's fare. However, Bavarian Pork Chops (page 854) is less calorific than many other pork chop recipes since most of the fat from the chops is trimmed and no extra fat is used during cooking. Thus each chop works out at a very reasonable 290 Cal / 1220 kJ.

Microtips

Start cooking large chops at 100% (High), then reduce power to 50% (Medium) to stop meat drying out.

Ginger chops on rice

30
mins

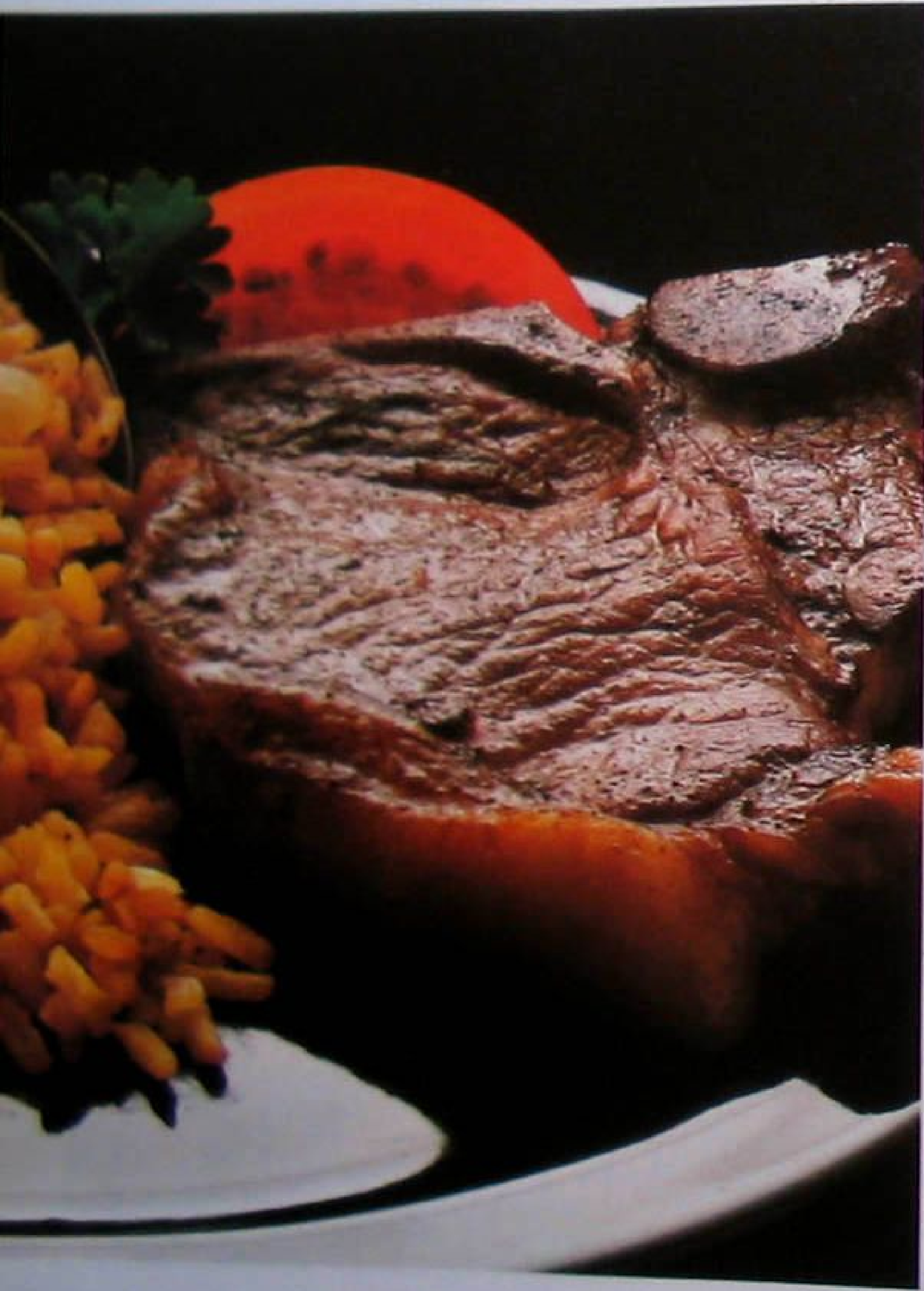
Standing time: 5 mins

225g / ½lb quick-cook rice
425ml / 15fl oz beef stock
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
6 × 175-225g / 6-8oz lean pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
15ml / 1tbls bottled brown sauce
salt and pepper
SERVES 6

Microtips

When using a browning dish, always check with your microwave manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat the dish longer than the recommended time as this can damage the glass turntable or cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on an upturned heatproof glass plate or special microwave trivet to minimise this risk.

Ginger Chops on Rice



Microwaving Ginger chops on rice

Place *the rice, beef stock, oil, onion, and ground ginger in a large rectangular dish. Mix together thoroughly. Arrange the chops on top of the mixture with the meatiest parts to the outside, and the bone inside towards the centre.*

Brush *chops with brown sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 20-30 minutes, or until cooked, rearranging once. Season with salt and pepper. Stand for 5 minutes.*

Bavarian pork chops

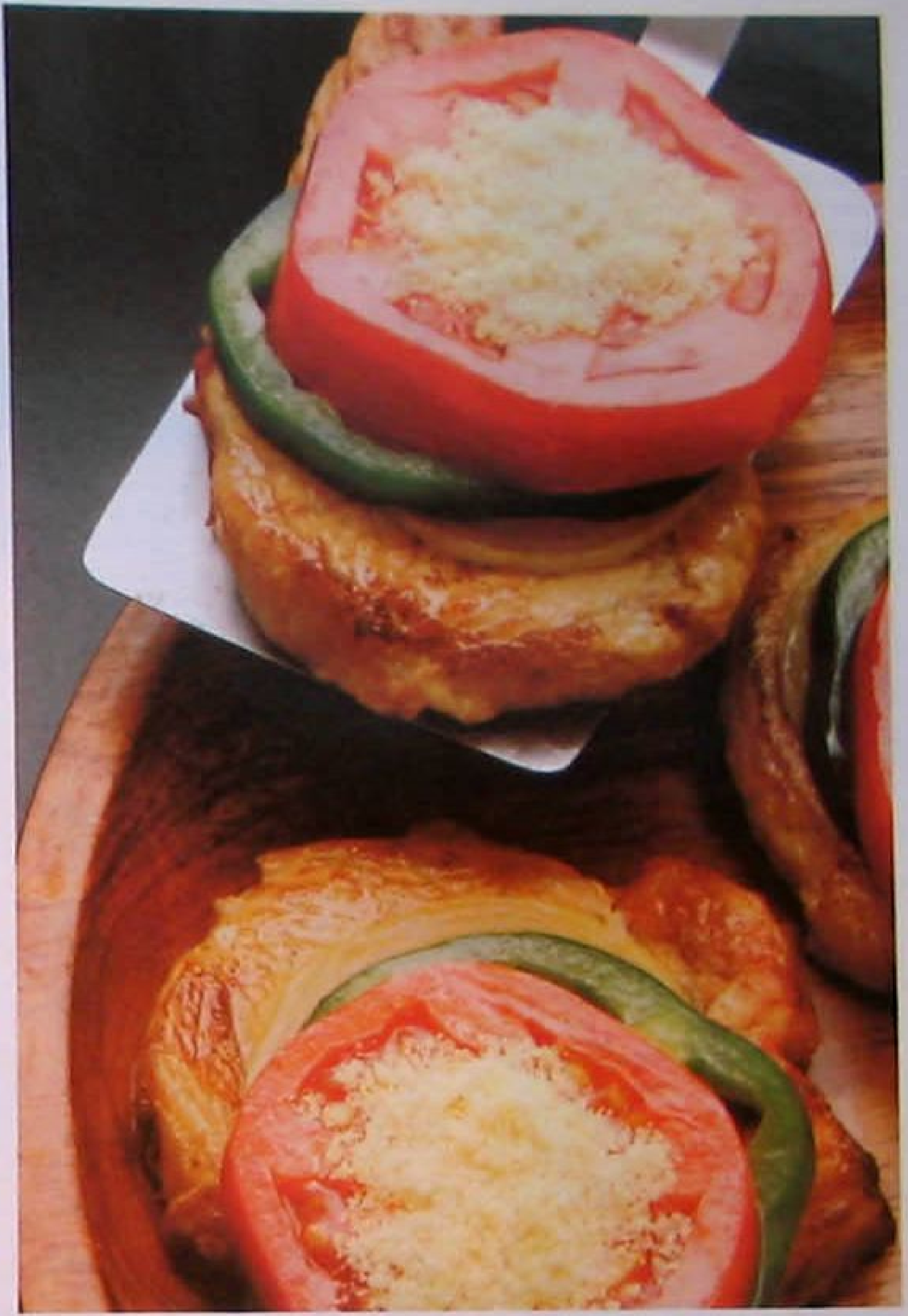
20
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb bottled sauerkraut
5ml / 1tsp cider vinegar
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
black pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp caraway seeds
1 red eating apple, cored and diced
4 lean pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
10ml / 2tsps Worcestershire sauce
SERVES 4

Bavarian Pork Chops

1 Combine the sauerkraut, vinegar, cinnamon, pepper, caraway seeds and apple in a shallow dish.
2 Arrange the chops on top, with the meatiest parts to the outside and brush with Worcestershire sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Rearrange the chops and stir the sauerkraut mixture. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, or until the meat feels firm and juices run clear if pierced with a knife. Allow to stand for 5 minutes.



Tomato-topped pork chops

25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 lean pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
pepper
4 large slices of onion
4 rings of green pepper
4 large slices of tomato
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

Tomato-topped Pork Chops

1 Preheat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High), or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil, place the chops on the dish and press down well, until the sizzling stops. Cook for 2 minutes at 100% (High), turning the chops halfway through cooking.
2 Sprinkle with pepper and top with the onion slices and green pepper rings. Arrange chops with the meatiest parts to the outside.
3 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-8 minutes, rearranging the chops halfway

through cooking.

4 Top with tomato slices and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Microwave for a further 12-15 minutes, rearranging a further three times. Allow to stand for 5 minutes then serve with jacket potatoes and a green vegetable.

Cook's notes

When casseroling chops, you will be left with quite a lot of cooking juices. Use these cooking juices to make a tasty and nourishing gravy. Mix 15ml / 1tbls plain flour with 30ml / 2tbls water in a jug. Whisk in cooking juices and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring well two or three times.

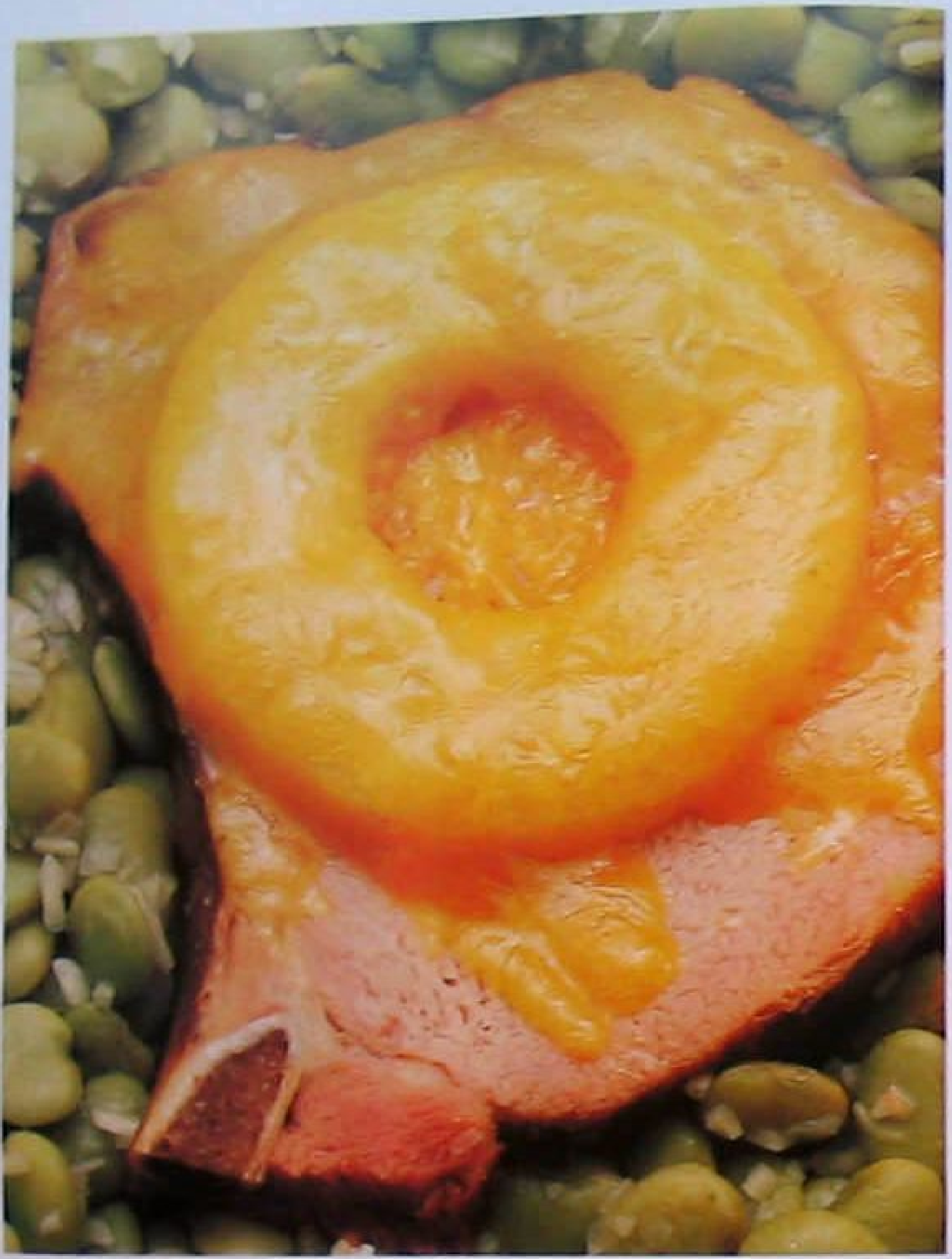
Cheesy chops

27 mins

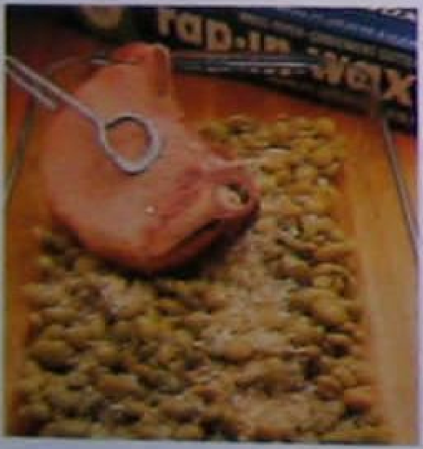
Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb can broad or lima beans, drained
1 small onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
4 lean pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
4 slices canned pineapple
100g / 4oz grated cheese

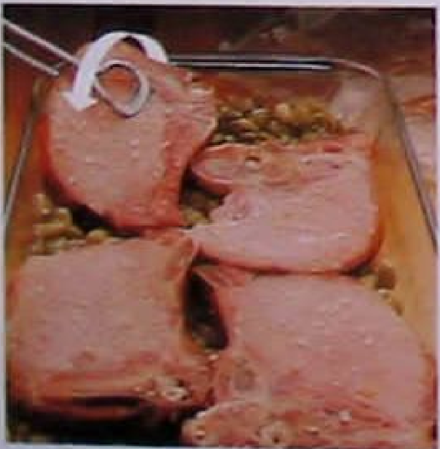
SERVES 4



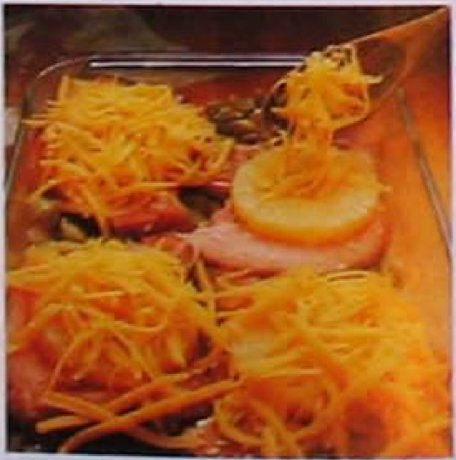
How to microwave Cheesy chops



Combine *beans, onion and oil in a rectangular dish. Place chops on top, meatiest parts to the outside. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.*



Turn *chops over, re-cover and microwave for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 12 minutes, turning the dish halfway through cooking.*



Top *each chop with pineapple slice; sprinkle with cheese. Re-cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes, or until cheese melts. Stand for 5 minutes.*

Suet puddings

Old-time suet puddings are back in speedy modern style — the taste is the same but the cooking technique is adapted for the microwave. So give your family a traditional treat that can be made in minutes.

Suet puddings are among the most successful of all baked foods in the microwave, attaining a lightness and puffiness they seldom duplicate by conventional methods. Moreover, the time saving is remarkable: many of the puddings here are cooked in under 10 minutes! As an added bonus, the kitchen will not be full of steam.

Like many other microwave bakes, suet puddings have a pale colour — unless the recipe uses brown sugar or treacle or a similar naturally dark ingredient. However, it is easy to improve the colour of a turned-out pudding by coating the inside of the basin with brown breadcrumbs or biscuit crumbs before filling it.

Standing time is short — about 5 minutes — for most of these puddings. However, do not let them cool; this makes the pastry limp and heavy.

Assessing 'doneness' is really a matter of experience. These puddings are ready when they are well puffed up and the top is crispy-crumbly.

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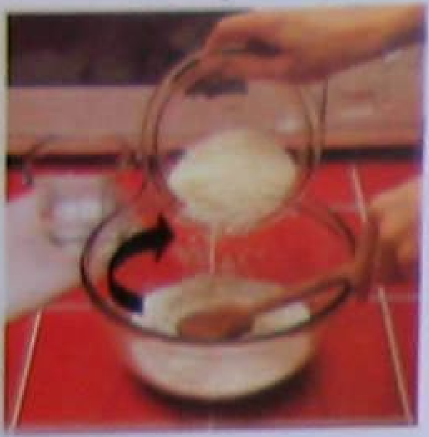
* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use cooking margarine instead of suet in all recipes.

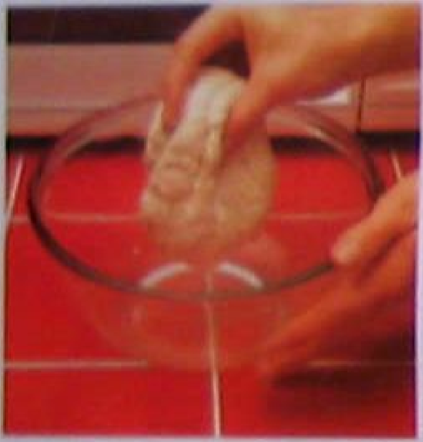
Sussex Pond Pudding

RAY DUNS

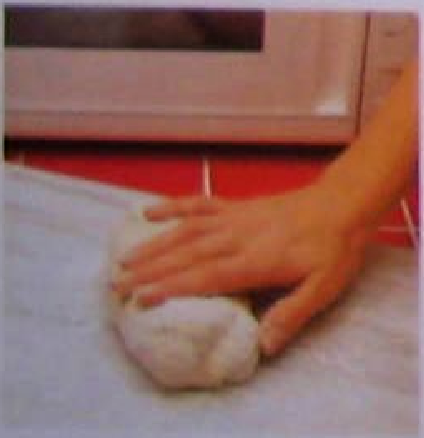
How to make basic suet pastry



Sift *the flour into a large bowl. Add the suet and mix thoroughly together using either a palette knife or a wooden spoon.*



Stir *just enough water into the evenly blended mixture to make a soft, but not sticky dough, which is just able to leave the sides of the bowl cleanly.*



Turn *out the pastry on to a lightly floured surface and knead for about 1 minute, or until it is smooth, elastic and no longer sticky.*

Basic suet pastry

175g / 6oz self-raising flour
75g / 3oz shredded suet
125ml / 4fl oz water

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

Blackberry and apple layer

6
mins

Standing time: 4-5 mins

Other mixtures of fruit could be used, such as rhubarb and orange. Try using plain, uncoated biscuits such as ginger biscuits.

1-2 oatmeal or bran biscuits, crushed
2 small cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced
200g / 7oz blackberries
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
50-100g / 2-4oz soft brown sugar
1 quantity basic suet pastry

SERVES 4-6

1 Grease an 850ml / 1½pt pudding basin. Coat the bottom and sides with the crushed biscuits. In a bowl, mix together the apples, blackberries, cinnamon, lemon juice and brown sugar, using a wooden spoon, taking care not to crush the berries.

2 Roll out a quarter of the pastry and use to line the bottom of the basin. Cover with half the blackberry mixture. Roll out half the remaining pastry to a 10cm / 4in round and place in the basin. Cover with the rest of the blackberry mixture.

3 Roll out the remaining pastry to a 12.5cm / 5in round. Place on top of the final blackberry layer and press the edges firmly against the sides of the basin.

4 Cover loosely with vented cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Let the pudding stand in the basin for 4-5 minutes before turning out into a rimmed serving dish. Serve with cream or pouring custard.

Blackberry and Apple Layer

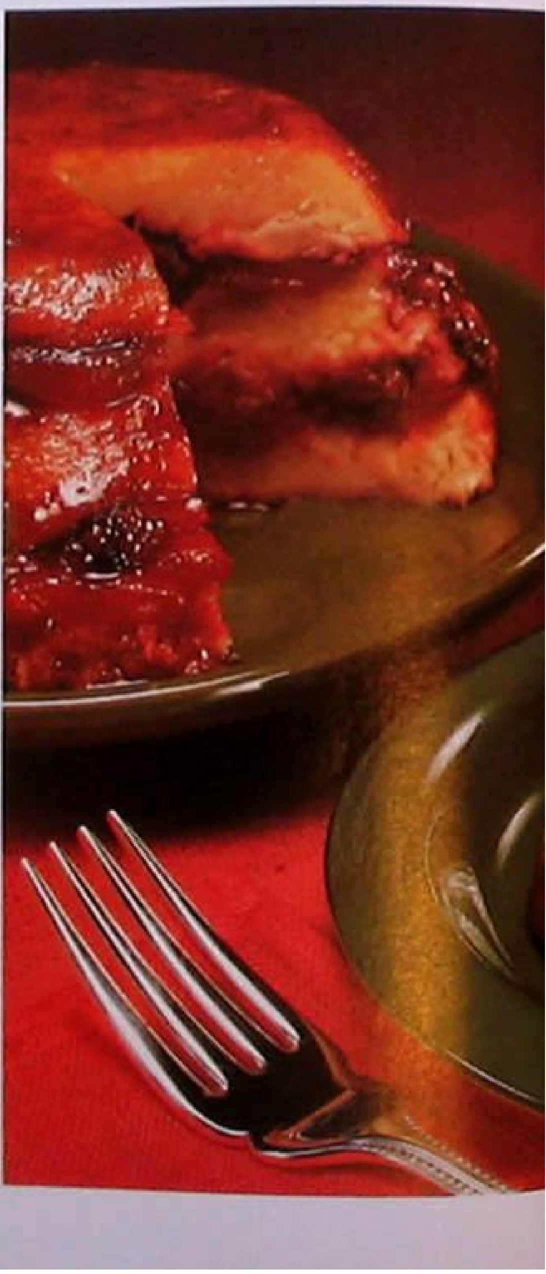
Cook's notes

Always loosely cover the basin with vented cling film; this traps the moisture and also protects against overspill.

When making layered and filled suet puddings, never fill to the very top of the basin — the sweet filling (which cooks more quickly than the pastry lid) can bubble over. It is best to leave an inch or so to give the pudding room for rising.

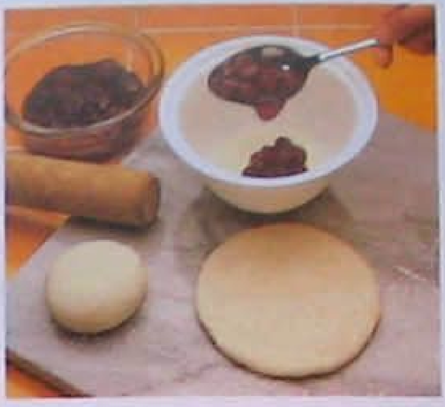
Microtips

To warm syrup or jam for pouring over a cooked pudding, spoon into a heatproof jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 seconds.

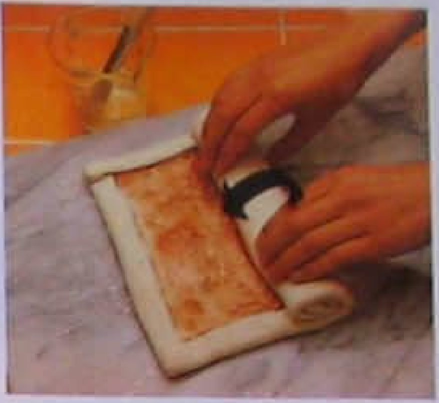


RAY DUNS

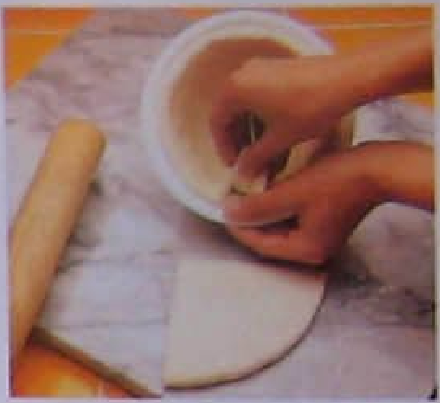
Step-by-step to assembling suet puddings



Layer puddings: *roll out a quarter of the pastry to fit the bottom of the greased basin. Spread with filling. Roll out half remaining pastry and add to the basin. Cover with more filling. Roll out remaining pastry for a lid.*



Roly polys: *roll out pastry to a rectangle about 6mm / ¼in thick. Trim the edges. Spread the filling almost to the edges of the pastry. Turn the edges on to the filling on all sides, then roll up from one short end.*



Filled puddings: *roll out pastry until just larger than top of basin. Cut out one quarter. Line greased basin, sealing seam with water. Fill. Turn edges over filling; brush with water. Use reserved pastry to make lid.*

Festive layer pudding

10
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz self-raising flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz white breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz shredded suet
2 eggs
45ml / 3tbls milk
100g / 4oz mincemeat*

SAUCE
10ml / 2tsp arrowroot
75g / 3oz mincemeat
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
150ml / ¼pt cider or apple juice

SERVES 6

1 Lightly grease a 1.1L / 2pt pudding basin. Sift the flour with the baking powder and salt. Mix in the breadcrumbs and suet.

2 Whisk the eggs and milk and stir into the dry mixture to make a soft dropping consistency.

3 Spread a quarter of the suet mixture into the basin. Spread half the mincemeat evenly on top. Add a second layer of suet mixture, spread with the remaining mincemeat then finish with the remaining suet mixture.

4 Cover loosely to allow for rising; microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, turning once or twice. Stand for 5 minutes.

5 To make the sauce, mix the arrowroot into the mincemeat. Stir in lemon juice and cider or apple juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring twice.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use fruitmince.

Jam roly poly

4½
mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity basic suet pastry
75ml / 5tbls jam

SERVES 4

1 Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured surface to a 23 × 33cm / 9 × 13in rectangle. Trim edges.

2 Spread the jam over the pastry, leaving a 12mm / ½in margin around the edges. Turn the edges in over the jam and brush lightly with water.

3 Roll up the pastry evenly from one short end. Place the roll with the seam underneath on a lightly greased heatproof serving dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes. Brown under a hot grill. Serve with custard.

Sussex pond pudding

6 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

This classic English pudding is difficult to make successfully by conventional methods — but cooks perfectly in the microwave. When cut for serving, the rich golden syrup pours out to form a 'pond' around the pudding. The lemon will be quite tender, so serve a little with every portion.

2 ginger biscuits, crushed
1½ basic quantities suet pudding
45ml / 3 tbls sultanas
45ml / 3tbls raisins
100g / 4oz unsalted butter, diced
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
1 thin-skinned lemon

SERVES 4

1 Grease an 850ml / 1½pt pudding basin, and coat the base and sides with the crushed biscuits; roll out the pastry to a circle 25cm / 10in diameter.
2 Cut out one quarter of the pastry and put aside to use as a lid. Carefully line the basin with the pastry; brush the seam lightly with water, and press together to seal. Brush the pastry rim with water.
3 Mix the sultanas, raisins, butter and sugar. Place half the mixture in the basin. Prick lemon with a fork and place on the filling. Add the remaining filling.
4 Roll out the reserved pastry on a lightly floured surface to a circle to fit the top of the basin. Place the circle over the filling and brush the edges lightly with water. Press the pastry edges firmly together.
5 Cover the top of the pudding loosely with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Let the pudding stand in the basin for 4-5 minutes before turning out on to a rimmed serving dish. Serve immediately with the hot lemon butter sauce from the centre of the pudding.

RAY DUNS

Plum dumplings

4½ mins

Standing time: none

1 basic quantity suet pastry
4 plums
30ml / 2tbls soft light brown sugar
2 digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar

MAKES 4 DUMPLINGS

1 Divide the pastry into four equal pieces. On a floured surface, roll each to a 125cm / 5in circle.
2 Slit one side of each plum. Remove stone and fill cavity with sugar. Wrap a plum in each piece of pastry; pinch edges together.
3 Mix the biscuit crumbs and caster sugar. Roll each dumpling in the mixture, then place seam side down on a greased plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes.

Spotted dick

4½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75g / 3oz self-raising flour
75g / 3oz brown breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz shredded suet
100g / 4oz currants
2tbls / 30ml candied peel
100-150ml / 3½-5fl oz milk
crunchy breadcrumbs for sprinkling (see page 117)

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix together the flour, breadcrumbs, suet, currants and peel. Add sufficient milk to make a soft but not sticky dough.
2 Using your hands, roll the dough into a fat sausage shape about 20cm / 8in long. Sprinkle with half the breadcrumbs. Wrap the roll shape loosely in greaseproof paper, tucking ends under.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes. Remove from the oven, sprinkle with the rest of the breadcrumbs and stand for 5 minutes. Serve with custard.

Spotted Dick

Pineapple

One of the most versatile fruits, pineapple is delicious on its own, or in sweet or savoury combinations — it's a natural for microwave cookery.

Fresh pineapple is usually served cold, but is even more mouthwatering served hot. It becomes juicier and the flavour and fragrance are intensified. Microwaving, is by far the quickest and easiest way of cooking it.

Canned pineapple, a good store-cupboard standby, is just as good as fresh in hot dishes. It is widely available in several forms — slices, cubes, chunks, tidbits and crushed, either in syrup or natural juice.

Slices of canned or fresh pineapple are especially decorative. Use them to top gammon or pork steaks (see Pineapple and Mustard Gammon, page 863) or under a light, moist sponge.

Pineapple Upside-down Cake

How to select and store pineapple

Choose *a pineapple which is heavy for its size. A light fruit may be past its best and even rotting inside. Large fruit yield a higher proportion of fruit to skin. Choose one that is firm and dry, with well developed, slightly separated eyes and a sweet fragrance.*

How to prepare pineapple

Using *a long sharp knife, cut off crown and stem ends. Stand the pineapple upright and slice off skin thinly in narrow strips, leaving as much fruit as possible.*

Remove *the 'eyes' by making shallow diagonal cuts on both sides of each row of 'eyes'. Slice flesh into rings, wedges or bite-sized chunks. Remove core if tough.*

Slimmer's notes

Fresh pineapple has only 46Cal / 194 kJ per 100g / 4oz serving. If using canned, choose pineapple in natural juice.

Cook's notes

Pineapple juice makes an excellent marinade for tough cuts of meat as it makes the meat more tender as well as flavouring it.

Freezer notes

Fresh pineapple chunks or slices can be frozen for up to 6-8 months. Choose quality, ripe fruit; peel, core and chop. Pack in rigid containers, separating layers with freezer tissue, or cover with a syrup made by dissolving 225g / 8oz sugar in 575ml / 1pt water and boiling for 1 minute. Leave 12mm / ½in headspace if covering with syrup. Crushed pineapple can also be frozen, with 100g / 4oz sugar to about 350g / 12oz fruit.

Refrigerate *whole pineapple in the crisper drawer, but do not keep it more than a few days, or it will go past its peak of ripeness.*

Pineapple upside-down cake

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz butter
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls clear honey
5 drained canned pineapple rings
5 drained maraschino cherries
12 walnut or pecan halves

SPONGE
100g / 4oz margarine, softened
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
2 eggs
100g / 4oz self-raising flour, sifted
30ml / 2tbls pineapple juice (from the can)

SERVES 8

1 Place the butter in a 20cm / 8in square dish. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted. Add sugar and honey, mix well and spread evenly over base of dish.

2 Arrange the pineapple rings on the cooked base. Place a cherry in the centre of each ring. Arrange walnut or pecan halves round edge. Place dish on an inverted saucer in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes.

3 Meanwhile, place all the sponge ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Beat for 2-3 minutes with a

wooden spoon, or for 1 minute with an electric mixer.
4 Spoon sponge mixture over the pineapple rings and roughly level. Place the dish on the inverted saucer. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, rotating the dish a quarter turn three times. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for a further 4-5 minutes, until a wooden cocktail stick inserted in centre of the cake comes out clean.
5 Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Loosen edges with a palette knife, then invert the cake on to serving plate. Serve warm with custard or pouring cream or cold on its own with whipped double cream.

Pineapple kebabs

4¾ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 small pineapple, prepared (see left)
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
8 maraschino cherries

SERVES 8

1 Cut pineapple into four thick slices, about 2.5cm / 1in wide. Cut each slice into eight chunks, cutting away the core if tough. Thread four chunks on each of eight wooden skewers, about 30cm / 12in long. Arrange on a roasting rack over a dish. Set aside.
2 Place butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Stir in the sugar and cinnamon.
3 Brush half over pineapple chunks. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn over and rearrange skewers. Brush with remaining glaze and continue microwaving for 2½-3 minutes.
4 Add a cherry to each skewer, transfer to serving dish and glaze with juices from dish. Let stand 2 minutes; serve hot.

VARIATION

For a chocolate-flavoured glaze, microwave 5ml / 1tsp cocoa powder with the butter.

Pineapple and mustard gammon

7 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Fresh pineapple tenderizes meat because the flesh contains enzymes which break down meat fibres.

2 prime gammon steaks*, about 225g / 8oz each
40g / 1½oz unsalted butter, softened
10ml / 2tsp wholegrain mustard
4 pineapple slices, fresh or canned

SERVES 4

1 Cut gammon steaks in half and snip the rind at 12mm / ½in intervals. Arrange on a plate, with the rind to the outer edge.
2 Mix butter and mustard together, spread half over steaks. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes.
3 Turn steaks over and spread with the remaining mustard butter. Top each with a pineapple slice and continue to microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until heated.
4 Stand for 3 minutes, covered, before serving with fresh garden peas and creamed or mashed potatoes.

VARIATION

Pineapple and mustard gammon for two: halve all the ingredients. Follow the recipe, but microwave the halved steaks for 3 minutes on each side. Stand for 3 minutes.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use ham steaks.

Pineapple Kebabs

Cook's notes

Uncut pineapple has a strong scent, but this is inhibited by cold. Unlike some other fruit, it does not taint other food when stored in the refrigerator. However, cut pineapple should be covered with cling film to prevent it drying out and tainting other food.

Sticky Pineapple Rings

Pineapple boats with tomato dip

8½ mins

Standing time: none

A 'fun' first course to serve at an informal meal or barbecue — and a great favourite with children. Make sure you scoop up lots of the tangy dip with each piece of pineapple.

1 large pineapple

DIP

1 onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp soft brown sugar
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
45ml / 3tbls tomato ketchup

SERVES 8

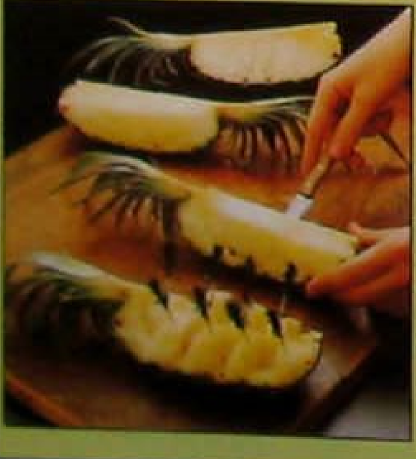
1 Prepare the pineapple boats (see Cook's notes, right).

2 To prepare the dip, reserve 5ml / 1tsp each chopped onion and green pepper for garnish. Mix remaining onion and green pepper with tomatoes, sugar and salt. Season generously with pepper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice, vinegar and Worcestershire sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in the ketchup and microwave for a further 4-5 minutes.

4 Cool for 10 minutes, then purée in a blender. Pour into serving bowl and sprinkle with the reserved onion and green pepper. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Cook's notes

To prepare pineapple 'boats', cut the pineapple in half through the crown. Cut each half into wedges. Remove the core. Cut the flesh away from skin, then cut into slices. Slide alternate slices over edge of skin. Spear on cocktail sticks for dipping.



Sticky pineapple rings

12 mins

Standing time: none

This dessert is delicious hot or cold. The cream cheese starts to melt as soon as it comes into contact with the boiling hot sugar and on cooling it turns into a rich sticky sauce.

45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
25g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbls caster or soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
4 fresh or canned pineapple slices
100g / 4oz cream cheese with pineapple

SERVES 4

1 Spread the flaked almonds in a shallow ovenproof dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, shaking well halfway through. Set aside.

2 Place butter, sugar and 2.5ml / ½tsp of the cinnamon in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir well.

3 Preheat a browning dish for 5 minutes, at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions.

4 Coat one side of each pineapple slice generously with the sugar mixture. Place in the hot browning dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Turn the rings over and spread with the remaining sugar mixture. Microwave for a further 1 minute.

5 Mix the cream cheese with remaining cinnamon. Spoon into the centre of each pineapple slice. Sprinkle the slices with flaked almonds and serve immediately or allow to cool and chill until required.

Microtips

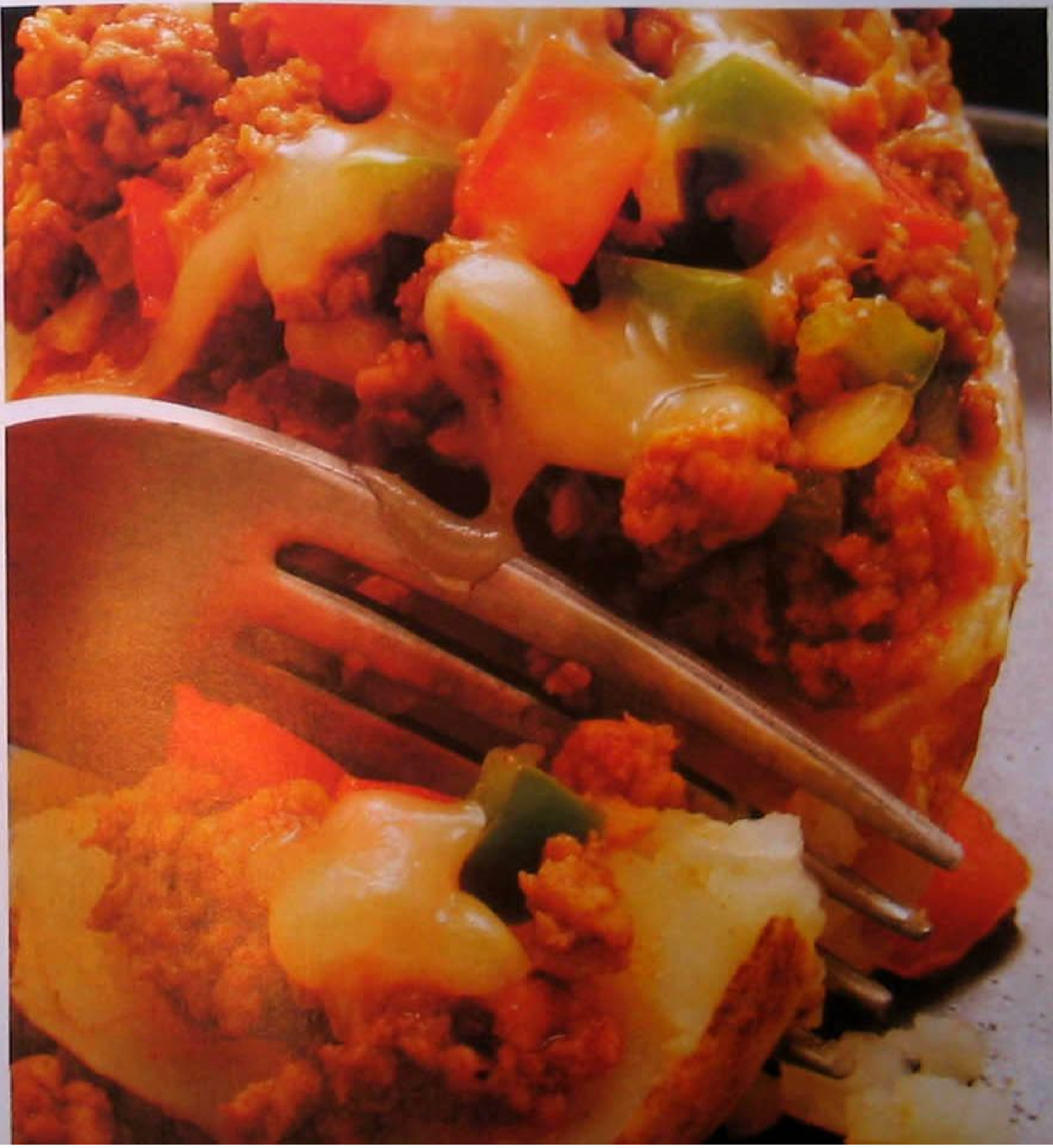
For a quick sweet sauce, blend 15ml / 3tsp cornflour with 15ml / 1tbls water. Stir into 376g / 13.3oz crushed pineapple in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until thickened, stirring well twice.

Dishy potatoes

The versatile baked potato makes a deliciously nutritious meal that can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish — and cooked the microwave way is ready in a fraction of the time it takes conventionally.

Whether you prefer baked potatoes served simply with a knob of butter or a spoonful of soured cream, or in more elaborate fashion with a tempting topping or filling, there's no doubt they cook to fluffy-textured perfection in the microwave.

Remember to prick the potatoes several times before baking to allow steam to escape during cooking, otherwise potatoes burst. Place them in a ring in the microwave, at least 2.5cm / 1in apart, leaving the centre space



Chilli Beef Potato Boats

clear. Arranged like this the microwave energy can penetrate the potatoes from all sides ensuring an evenly cooked result.

The microwave time increases with the number of potatoes baked at any one time. For example: one potato takes only 7 minutes, whereas four potatoes take 15 minutes. Nevertheless, these times are a fraction of those for conventional baking. Once the potatoes have had their initial cooking time (see chart), they are given standing time, wrapped in foil (shiny side in, to retain the heat), for 5-10 minutes to complete the cooking. Potatoes wrapped in foil retain their heat well for up to 30 minutes.

Chilli beef potato boats

27 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, each weighing about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart)

TOPPING
225g / 8oz lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
5ml / 1tsp chilli seasoning
225g / 8oz tomatoes, chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato paste
salt
100g / 4oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

SERVES 4

Slimmer's notes

Top baked potatoes with 15-30ml / 1-2tbls natural yoghurt instead of butter and reduce the calories to 215Cal / 905kJ per portion.

Cook's notes

The microwaving time for baking potatoes is included in each of the recipe time boxes. Standing time after baking is also given.

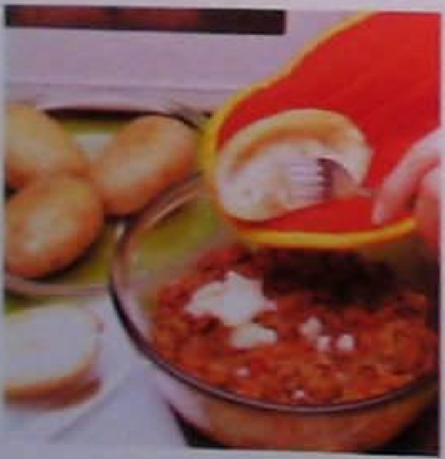
Microwave times for potatoes

SIZE	NUMBER	TIMES AT 100% (HIGH)	PROCEDURE
Use even-sized potatoes, each weighing about 225 / 8oz	1	7 minutes	Prick potatoes with a fork. Place on absorbent paper 2.5cm/1in apart. Microwave for time given (see left), turning and rearranging once. Wrap in foil (shiny side in) when just tender; let stand for 5-10 minutes until soft.
	2	8 minutes	
	3	12 minutes	
	4	15 minutes	
	5	17 minutes	
	6	20 minutes	

How to microwave Chilli beef potato boats

Combine *the minced beef, onion, celery and green pepper in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink, stirring twice. Drain off fat and liquid.*

Stir *in the chilli seasoning, chopped tomatoes, tomato paste and salt to taste. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring the mixture twice during cooking.*



Halve *the baked potatoes lengthways and, using a fork, remove some of the centre flesh, taking care not to break the shells. Flake the flesh and stir lightly into the mince mixture.*

Pile *the meat and vegetable mixture on to each potato and sprinkle with grated cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until cheese melts and the mince mixture is hot.*

Twice-baked Potatoes

Twice-baked potatoes

25
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, each weighing about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart)

FILLING

8 rashers streaky bacon, rinded
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls double cream
30ml / 2tbls milk
pepper
large pinch of celery or garlic salt
4 spring onions, chopped
paprika for dusting

SERVES 4

1 Put bacon on a sheet of absorbent paper on a plate, cover with another sheet of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Remove the paper and cut up bacon finely.

2 Halve the baked potatoes lengthways and carefully scoop out the centres into a bowl, leaving 6mm / ¼in shells. Set the potato shells aside while preparing the filling.

3 Mash the potato with the butter, cream, milk and seasonings and mix well. Stir in half of the bacon and spring onions and spoon the mixture back into potato shells and fluff up lightly with a fork.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until heated through, then sprinkle each one with the remaining bacon and onions. Dust the potatoes with paprika and serve at once with a mixed salad, if liked.

Soured cream baked potatoes

19
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, each weighing about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart)

FILLING

4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded
50g / 2oz butter
120ml / 8tbls soured cream
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Put the bacon on a sheet of absorbent paper on a plate, cover with another sheet of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% for 1 minute. Remove paper and cut bacon into small pieces.

2 Cut a lengthways slice from the top of each potato. Carefully scoop out the flesh into a bowl, leaving a 6mm / ¼in border and without damaging the shells.

3 Mash the potato flesh with the butter, soured cream and seasoning. Beat well until smooth and fluffy, then carefully spoon back into the potato shells.

4 Sprinkle tops with grated cheese and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until heated through and cheese melts. Sprinkle with bacon and serve.

Soured cream baked potatoes for two: halve all the quantities of the ingredients and cook at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes at step 4, then sprinkle with bacon.

Soured Cream Baked Potatoes

Curried chicken potato topper

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, each weighing about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart, page 866)

TOPPING

½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
4 spring onions, thinly sliced
1 carrot, grated
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt milk
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
5ml / 1tsp curry powder
225g / 8oz cooked chicken meat, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes

SERVES 4

1 Put the prepared vegetables in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Drain off any liquid.

2 In a jug, blend the cornflour smoothly with a little of the milk, then add remaining milk, chicken stock cube and curry powder. Whisk well, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until thickened, whisking well after each minute.

3 Add the sauce and chicken meat to the vegetables in the bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until heated through.

4 Halve the baked potatoes lengthways, then lift and flake the centres with a fork. Spoon the hot topping over potatoes and serve at once.

VARIATION

Substitute cooked diced lamb or beef for the chicken and replace the chicken stock cube with a beef cube instead.

Cook's notes

To give potatoes a crisp skin, place in a conventional oven heated to 190°C / 375°F / Gas 5 for 5-10 minutes before filling.

Savoury stuffed potatoes

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, each weighing about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart, page 866)
60ml / 4tbls milk
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp onion salt
5ml / ¼tsp finely chopped parsley
175g / 6oz ham, finely minced

SERVES 4

1 Halve the baked potatoes lengthways. Carefully scoop out the centres, leaving a 6mm / ¼in thick shell. Set the shells aside.

2 Mash the potato flesh with the milk, yoghurt, pepper to taste, onion salt and parsley. Beat until smooth and fluffy. Add the finely minced ham and mix well.

3 Pipe or spoon the potato mixture into the potato shells and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until heated through.

Slimmer's notes

Use skimmed milk and replace the ham with finely chopped chicken meat and reduce the calorie content of the recipe to 290Cal / 121kJ for each stuffed potato.

Beefy mushroom potatoes

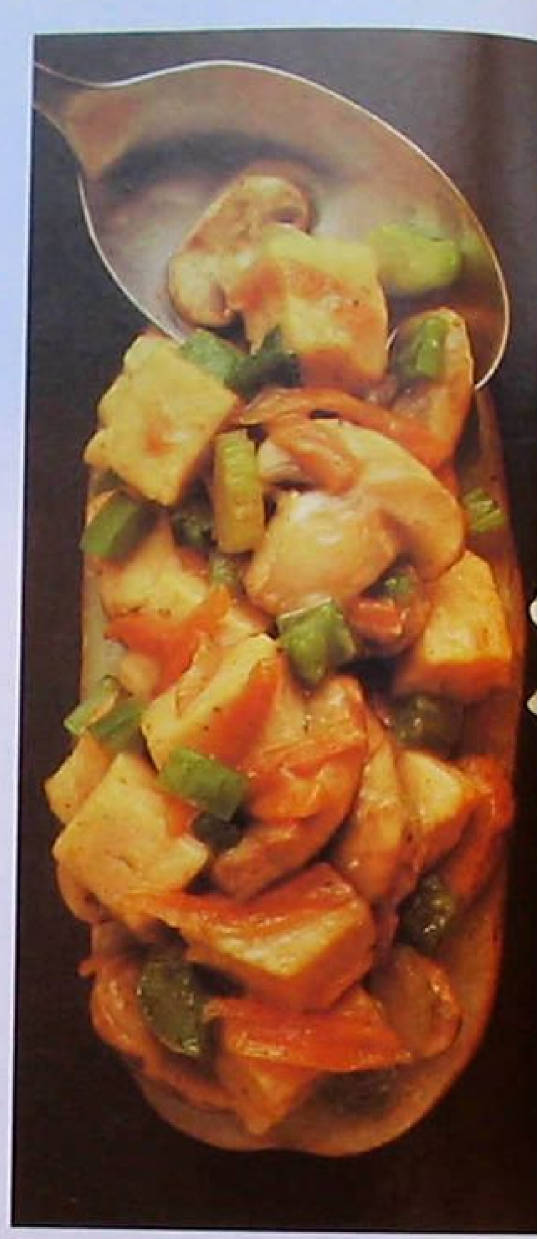
25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 potatoes, each about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart, page 866)

TOPPING

225g / 8oz minced beef
1 onion, sliced
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt tomato juice
60ml / 4tbls milk
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
chopped parsley, to garnish



SERVES 4

1 In a bowl, combine the minced beef, onion, mushrooms and garlic. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring twice during cooking. Drain off any fat and liquid.

2 Smoothly blend the cornflour with a little of the tomato juice, then stir in the remaining juice and milk. Add to the meat mixture and stir in the seasonings. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until thickened, stirring twice.

3 Halve the baked potatoes lengthways, then using a fork, lift and flake the centres. Spoon the hot topping over potatoes. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve at once.

From left to right: *Curried Chicken Potato Topper, Savoury Stuffed Potatoes, Beefy Mushroom Potatoes and Cheesy Turkey Potato Toppers*

Cheesy turkey potato toppers

30 mins

Standing time: 7 mins

4 potatoes, each about 225g / 8oz, baked (see chart, page 866)

TOPPING

225g / 8oz frozen broccoli
60ml / 4tbls water
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
1 small onion, grated
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt milk
100-175g / 4-6oz cooked turkey meat, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
2 slices processed cheese, each cut into eight strips
SERVES 4

1 Put the broccoli in a bowl with the water. Cover and cook at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, rearranging halfway through cooking. Stand for 2 minutes, then drain well and chop the broccoli coarsely.

2 In a bowl, combine the chicken stock cube, onion, mustard and cornflour. Blend in the milk, slowly. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the sauce is smooth and thickened, stirring twice during cooking.

3 Add the broccoli and turkey to the sauce mixture, stir well and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until heated through.

4 Meanwhile, halve the baked potatoes lengthways, then lift and flake the centres. Spoon the topping over the potatoes and arrange four strips of processed cheese over the top of each one. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds or until the cheese melts. Serve at once, with a crisp green salad.

Cheesy turkey toppers for two: halve all the ingredients and microwave broccoli for 3-4 minutes. Cook the cornflour mixture for 45-60 seconds, stirring once. Microwave the broccoli, turkey and sauce mixture for 1-2 minutes until heated and, finally, microwave the potatoes with topping for 15-30 seconds, or until the cheese strips melt. Serve at once, with a crisp green salad.

FREEZING KNOW-HOW 28

Liver

Thawing and cooking frozen liver in the microwave is both speedy and successful. The liver retains all its succulence and is meltingly tender to eat.

Frozen liver, readily available from supermarkets and freezer centres, is a handy (and healthy) standby as it keeps for two to three months in the freezer.

Calves' and lambs' liver are interchangeable in recipes, although calves' liver has a more delicate taste and texture so requires slightly less cooking time. Pigs' liver is stronger in flavour and is best in recipes with strong-flavoured sauces. The slightly richer flavour of chicken livers makes them perfectly suited to a pâté (see page 872).

All liver should be thawed on a low power setting: 20-30% (Defrost). Standing time is then necessary to ensure the liver is completely thawed so it remains tender and cooks evenly. Thaw frozen liver in its original wrapping, provided no metal ties or staples are used. Just separate the liver carefully as it thaws.

Alternatively, it can be unwrapped and transferred to the dish in which it is to be cooked (see steps, right).

Prick liver with a fork (see Microtips, below right) before cooking and, as a general rule, it is best to cover it during cooking to prevent splattering. Take care not to overcook liver as it quickly becomes tough and dry. To test, cut into the centre: when ready the liver should still be slightly pink inside.

Standing times are not generally necessary for liver when cooked plainly on its own. When cooking liver in a casserole, however, it is best to leave the finished dish to stand for a few minutes.

Remember to thoroughly dry thawed liver with absorbent paper before cooking.

PAUL WEBSTER

Liver and Bacon Special

How to thaw liver slices

Calculate *the thawing time at 6-7 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Unwrap liver and place in a dish. Microwave at 20%-30% (Defrost) for one third of the calculated time.*

Separate *the slices carefully; if possible, turn over and microwave for half the remaining calculated time. Separate the pieces completely and spread out evenly in the dish.*

Leave to stand *for 5 minutes to complete thawing through to the centre. Rinse in cold water, then dry the liver thoroughly with absorbent paper before using.*

How to thaw chicken livers

Microwave *a 225g / 8oz carton of chicken livers at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-2½ minutes. Uncover the carton and separate out the livers.*

Remove *any thawed livers and set aside on a plate. Spread out the remaining livers in a dish and microwave for 2-2½ minutes.*

Leave to stand *for 5 minutes to complete thawing through to the centre. Rinse then dry thoroughly. Pierce the livers to test if thawed.*

Microtips

Pierce the liver before cooking to break the thin, outer membrane and prevent the liver exploding in the cooker. Use a fork or tip of a knife to prick each piece of liver evenly all over.

Cook's notes

The times given in the recipe time boxes include both thawing liver and cooking the dish. Standing time given includes both standing after thawing (always 5 minutes) and after cooking.

Liver and bacon special

22¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 small onions
40g / 1½oz butter
5ml / 1tsp sugar
4 slices streaky bacon, rinded
450g / 1lb lambs' liver, thawed (see steps, above)
15ml / 1tbls plain flour seasoned with salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls dry sherry

SERVES 4

1 Place the onions, butter and sugar in a small dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.

2 Cut each rasher of bacon across in half. Lay the pieces flat and stretch out slightly with the back of a knife. Wrap a piece of bacon round each onion and secure with a wooden cocktail stick. (Reserve the buttery juices from the onion in the dish.)

3 Place the bacon rolls on a plate between two pieces of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes until crisp.

4 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions. Prick the liver and toss in the seasoned flour. Quickly add the butter, then the liver to the browning dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds. Turn the liver over, cover and then microwave for a further 4 minutes or until just tender.

5 Add the sherry and the reserved juices from the onions, then the bacon rolls. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until the bacon rolls are heated through. Serve with parslied creamed potatoes, or rice, and vegetables such as sliced marrow.

Cook's notes

Coating liver in seasoned flour prevents it drying out. The simplest way to coat it is to combine the flour and any seasoning in a plastic bag. Hold the end of the bag and shake so flour and seasoning are evenly mixed. Add the liver to the bag and shake again until all the meat is completely coated. Shake off excess flour before cooking the liver.

Chicken liver party pâté

19 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Chicken livers make a rich pâté and so serve a large number of people. You need to make the pâté the day before as it must be chilled overnight.

700g / 1½lb chicken livers, thawed (see steps, page 871)
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
1 hard-boiled egg, chopped
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped onion
50g / 2oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp mustard powder
brown bread or toast, to serve

SERVES 8-10

1 Prick the chicken livers and place in a 1.7ml / 3pt casserole together with the stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes, stirring once; drain. Purée the livers, egg, and onion in a food processor. Turn into a bowl.

2 Microwave the butter at 30% (Low) for 5-10 seconds to soften. Stir into the puréed liver with the garlic until evenly blended. Season to taste, then blend with the remaining ingredients. Pour into a well-oiled 575ml / 1pt mould or dish.

3 Cover and chill for at least 6 hours or overnight. Loosen at the edges gently with a knife, then unmould pâté on to a serving plate, or leave in the dish. Garnish with chopped cucumber and tomato. Serve chilled with bread.

Chicken Liver Pâté

Casseroled liver

20 mins

Standing time: 7 mins

Serve this dish with plain boiled rice, cooked conventionally.

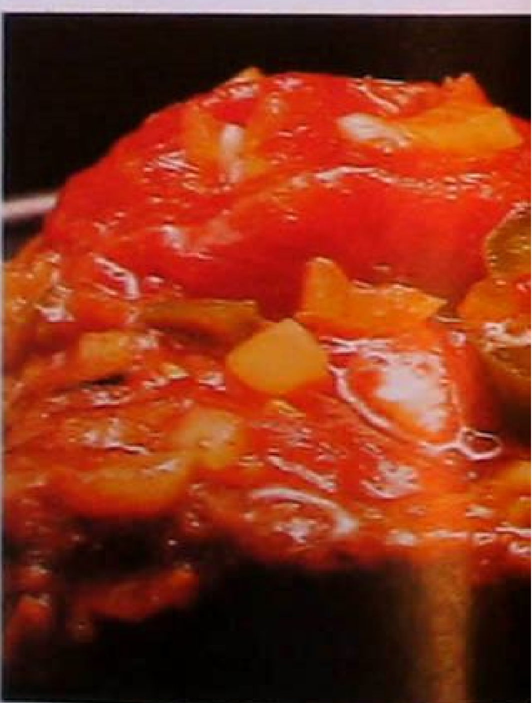
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
400g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp red wine vinegar
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried rosemary
450g / 1lb lambs' liver thawed (see steps, page 871)
15ml / 1tbls plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
4 rings green pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion and oil in a casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until the onion is soft.

2 Add the tomatoes, vinegar and rosemary. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes.

3 Prick the liver and toss in the seasoned flour. Add to the casserole with the green pepper rings. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, turning the liver once. Let stand 2 minutes before serving.



Casseroled Liver

Liver Stroganoff

Breaded liver slices

15¾ mins

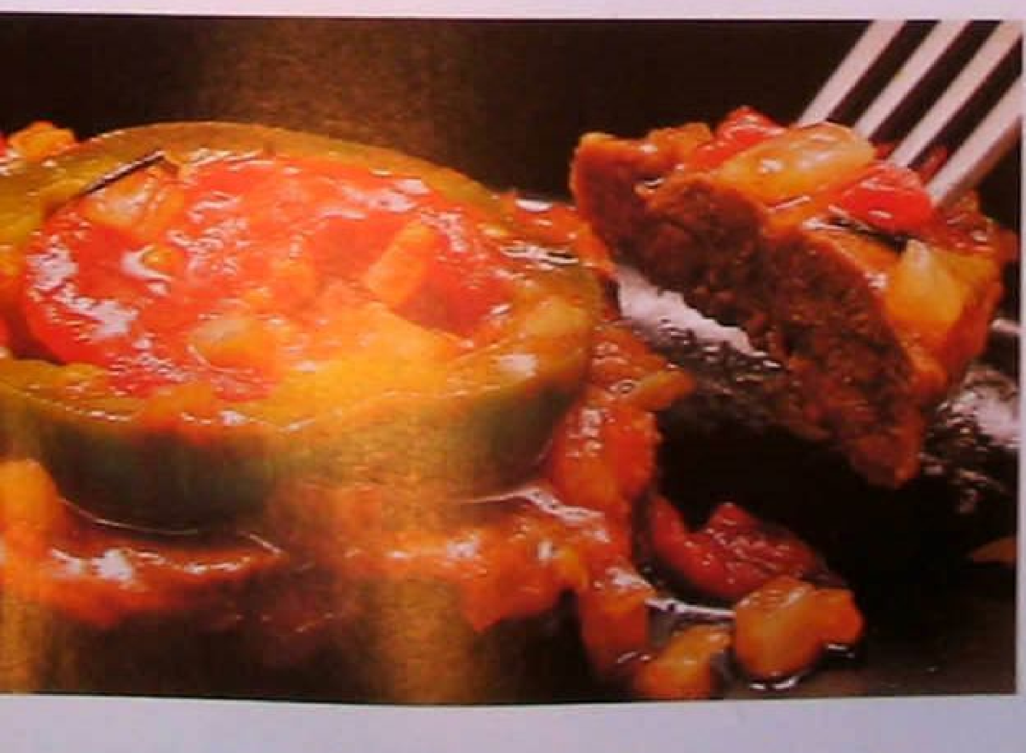
Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz dry breadcrumbs
3.5ml / ¾tsp dillweed
1 egg, beaten
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
450g / 1lb sliced calves' liver, thawed (see steps, page 871)

SERVES 4

1 Combine the crumbs and dillweed on a plate; beat the egg and lemon juice in a shallow dish. Prick the liver and dip into the egg, then in the crumbs to coat.

2 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions. Quickly add 25g / 1oz butter and the liver. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds. Turn the slices, cover and microwave a further 4 minutes. Serve with lemon slices, potatoes and peas.



Liver Stroganoff

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, chopped
25g / 1oz butter
450g / 1lb calves' liver, thawed (see steps, page 871) and cut into strips
30ml / 2tbls plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
15ml / Worcestershire sauce
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the mushrooms, onion and butter in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes or until tender.

2 Prick the liver and toss in the seasoned flour, then add to the casserole with the tomato purée and Worcestershire sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until the liver is tender.

3 Stir in the soured cream. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to heat through. Serve with noodles or rice and a tossed green salad.

American lunch for 6

American eating embraces a colourful mixture of the best of many different traditional cuisines. This informal lunch menu is wholesome and hearty enough to cater for the most king-sized of appetites.

This lunch menu reflects the vast variety of American cuisine. A classic salad creation starts the meal. This is followed by a great Jewish tradition — hot salt beef sandwiches — plus the all-American standard hamburger, served here with a truly transatlantic addition of peanuts. These hearty, filling main dishes are complemented by a crisp, refreshing salad. The whole meal is rounded off with a choice of irresistibly chewy brownies. Serve only the sandwiches or the burgers as a main dish for a less filling meal.

Offer guests a fresh-tasting mint julep as an aperitif — for each person mix 5ml / 1tsp caster sugar with a little water in a glass. Add 4-5 crushed fresh mint leaves and stir well. Fill almost to the top of the glass with crushed ice and add 30ml / 2tbls bourbon or whisky. Stir well, add a further 15ml / 1tbls bourbon and garnish with a spring of mint. Serve a Californian wine or chilled lager with the meal.

PAUL WEBSTER

Caesar salad

4¾ mins

Standing time: none

1 large crisp lettuce
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese

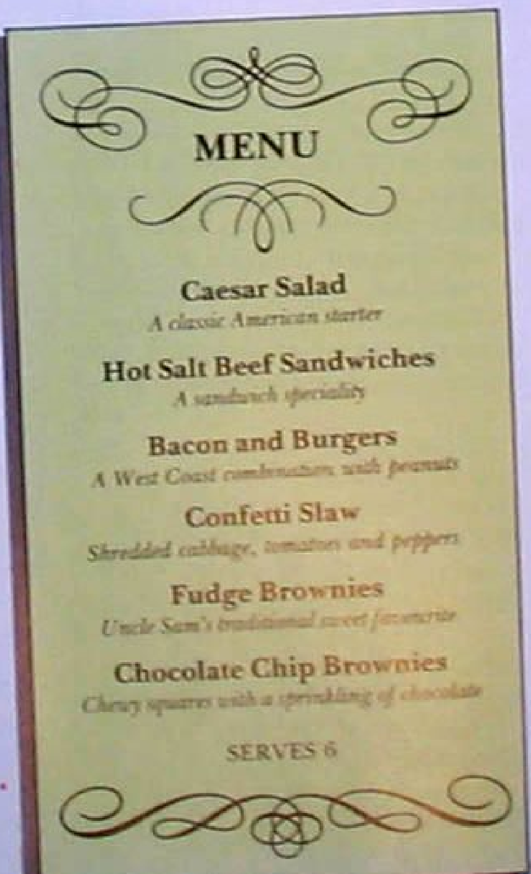
CROÛTONS
25g / 1oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 slices white bread, crusts removed, cut into small cubes

DRESSING
1 egg
30ml / 2tbls water
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
juice of 1 large lemon
7.5ml / 1½tsp Worcestershire sauce
90ml / 6tbls vinaigrette or French dressing

SERVES 6

1 To make the croûtons, place the butter in a bowl with the garlic. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted and hot. Add the cubes of bread and toss well to coat. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until crisp. Set aside and allow to cool.

2 Break the egg into a ramekin



MENU

Caesar Salad
A classic American starter

Hot Salt Beef Sandwiches
A sandwich speciality

Bacon and Burgers
A West Coast combination with peanuts

Confetti Slaw
Shredded cabbage, tomatoes and peppers

Fudge Brownies
Uncle Sam's traditional sweet favourite

Chocolate Chip Brownies
Chewy squares with a sprinkling of chocolate

SERVES 6

Countdown

The day before
Microwave both the Chocolate Chip and the Fudge Brownies and allow to cool. Microwave the chocolate frosting and butterscotch frosting, if liked. Frost the brownies and cover overnight.

Chill the lager to accompany the meal overnight.

Early morning on the day
Tear the lettuce into pieces for the Caesar Salad and place in a large serving bowl. Cover and refrigerate. Microwave the croûtons and set aside.

Make the minced beef mixture for the burgers, cover and refrigerate.

Assemble the Confetti Slaw and chill. If serving red wine, bring to room temperature.

1 hour before serving
Take the burger mixture from the fridge, make patties, then set aside. Microwave the bacon, crumble lightly and set aside.

Assemble the lettuce, croûtons, Parmesan and pepper for the Caesar salad. Microwave the egg as directed and make the dressing. Set aside.

15 minutes before serving
Preheat the browning dish for the burgers. Microwave and assemble the burgers and keep warm under foil. Serve aperitifs, and toss the Caesar salad. Place the salad on the table for the guests to help themselves.

During the party
While the Caesar salad is being eaten, microwave the Hot Salt Beef Sandwiches. After the salad is finished, bring out the Bacon and Burgers, Hot Salt Beef Sandwiches and Confetti Slaw. Finish the meal with the two kinds of brownies.

and prick the yolk. Add the water. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2½ minutes, so that the egg is hot but not set. Drain off the water.

3 Place the oil, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and vinaigrette in a bowl and add the egg. Whisk thoroughly until thick and frothy.

4 To assemble the salad, tear the lettuce into bite-sized pieces and place in a large salad bowl. Add the croûtons and Parmesan cheese. Toss lightly to mix. Pour in the dressing and toss again. Serve immediately.

Hot salt beef sandwiches

7 mins

Standing time: none

12 slices of rye bread
mild American mustard
350-450g / 12-16oz salt beef*, thinly sliced
4 pickled dill cucumbers, sliced lengthways

SERVES 6

1 Spread three of the slices of bread lightly with mustard and top with half the salt beef. Arrange the slices in a ring on a piece of absorbent paper in the cooker and cover with another piece. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes to warm the beef.

2 Top with slices of pickled cucumber and a little more mustard if liked, then top with three more slices of bread. Cover with absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds until warm. Serve immediately.

3 Repeat the procedure with the remaining three sandwiches.

Bacon and burgers

13¾ mins

Standing time: none

550g / 1¼lb minced beef
1 onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz salted peanuts, chopped
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper
5 rashers streaky bacon

TO SERVE
6 sesame buns, split in half
30ml / 6tsp mayonnaise
3 tomatoes, sliced
shredded lettuce

SERVES 6

1 Break up the minced beef using two knives, or chop quickly in a food processor.

2 Mix the minced beef with the onion, peanuts, egg, salt and pepper. Form into six patties and leave, covered, in the refrigerator.

3 Place the bacon on a double layer of absorbent paper and cover with two more layers. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3¾-5 minutes or until crisp. Crumble the bacon and set aside.

4 Heat a browning dish by microwaving at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the burgers to the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes on one side, then for 2 minutes on the second side.

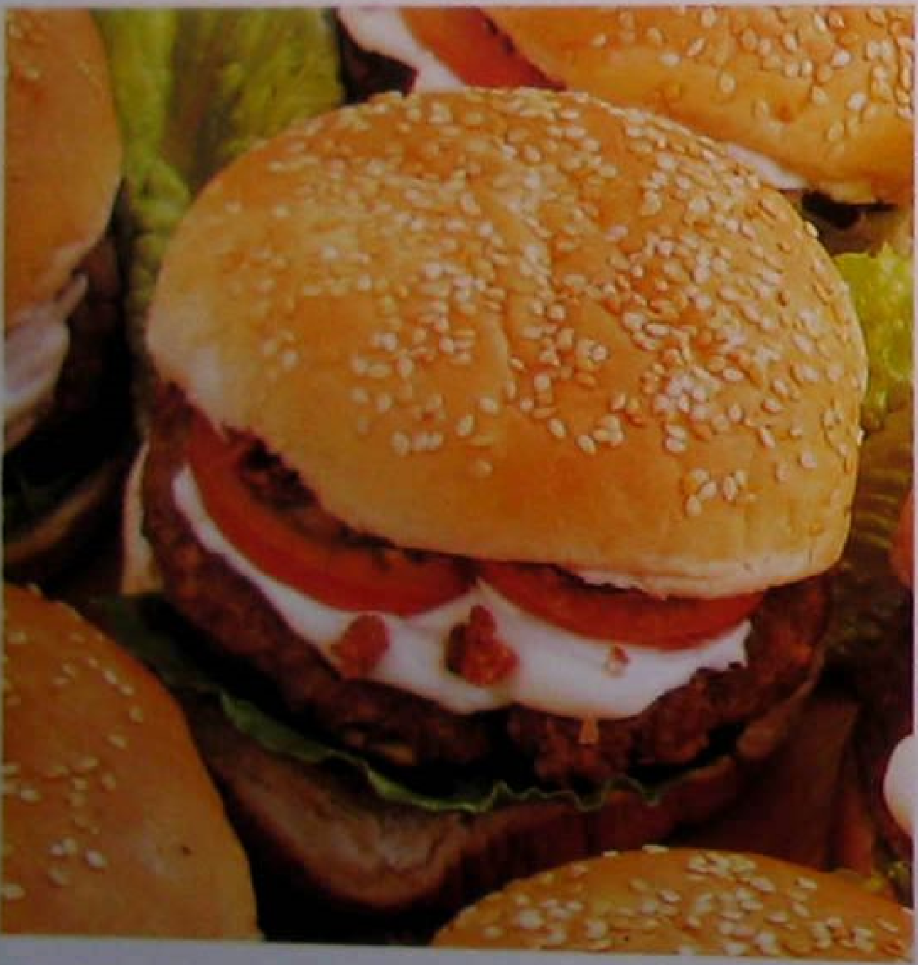
5 Serve the burgers in the buns, with a topping of mayonnaise, sliced tomato, and crumbled bacon on bed of lettuce.

Confetti slaw

700g / 1½lb white cabbage, shredded
2 tomatoes, chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small yellow pepper, seeded and chopped
½ small red pepper, seeded and chopped
½ small cucumber, chopped
6 spring onions, chopped

DRESSING
250ml / 9fl oz mayonnaise
250ml / 9fl oz soured cream
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt
pepper to taste

SERVES 6



Bacon and Burgers

PAUL WEBSTER

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use corned beef.

Fudge and Chocolate Chip Brownies

1 In a large bowl, combine the cabbage, tomatoes, green, yellow and red peppers, cucumber and onions.

2 Mix the dressing ingredients together in a small bowl.

3 Pour the dressing over the vegetables and toss well to coat. Cover and chill for several hours before serving.

Fudge brownies

8 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz plain cooking chocolate
75g / 3oz butter
225g / 8oz sugar
75g / 3oz plain flour, sifted
2 eggs
4ml / ¾tsp baking powder
few drops of vanilla flavouring
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz nuts, finely chopped (optional)

MAKES A 20cm / 8in SQUARE CAKE

1 Place the chocolate, butter and sugar in a mixing bowl. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 2-4 minutes until melted. Mix well, then add all the remaining ingredients and beat until well blended. Spread evenly in a lightly greased and lined dish.

2 Place the dish on an inverted plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes.

3 Allow the brownies to cool in the dish. Cut into squares when cold. If liked, top with chocolate frosting (see Part 4, page 97).

Chocolate chip brownies

6½ mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz butter
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
2 eggs
75g / 3oz plain flour, sifted
3ml / ¾tsp baking powder
few drops of vanilla flavouring
25g / 1oz nuts, chopped
50g / 2oz chocolate chips

MAKES A 20cm / 8in SQUARE CAKE

1 Place the butter in a mixing bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 60-75 seconds until melted.

2 Stir in the sugar, then add the remaining ingredients except for the chocolate chips.

3 Spread the mixture in a greased lined dish and sprinkle with half of the chocolate chips. Place the dish on an inverted plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, turning once.

4 Sprinkle the top of the brownies with the remaining chocolate chips and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, until the top is dry. Allow to cool in the dish, then cut into squares when cold. If liked you could top the Chocolate chip brownies with Butterscotch frosting (see Part 4, page 96).

Microtips

To test both sorts of brownies for doneness, touch the top of the mixture lightly in several places. If done it will spring back. If cooking in a glass dish, there should be little or no uncooked mixture visible through the base. Any surface moisture which is visible will dry during cooling as the brownies complete their cooking.

Cook's notes

If you have left-over brownies, store them closely wrapped in cling film in a cool place for 2-3 days. If they are unfrosted, they can be refreshed by microwaving, covered or still wrapped, at 100% (High) for 30 seconds per portion. Serve immediately.

Microwaving stuffings

With the help of a microwave, stuffings can be made in minutes — fruit, herbs or sausagemeat all add moisture and flavour and can transform a simple roast joint or bird into a delectable dish.

Stuffings can serve several purposes: they add flavour and moisture to meat, help keep poultry or a boned joint in good shape, make a small bird or joint go further — and are a great family favourite. They really make a tasty addition to any meat.

Most stuffings use breadcrumbs, rice or sausagemeat as a base. A variety of herbs, vegetables, fruit and nuts can be added, while brown rice or wholemeal breadcrumbs provide extra texture and flavour.

Any stuffing can be made quickly and easily with the help of a microwave. Small quantities of onion and other vegetables are quickly softened in butter; sausagemeat or bacon is speedily cooked, and other ingredients can be added and cooked in the same bowl. Stuffing cooked separately in a dish or made into balls is ready in two minutes and all microwaved stuffings will remain moist and full of flavour.

Remove the stuffing from the meat and store separately in the refrigerator. Use within one or two days, heated for 1-2 minutes in the microwave or served cold with the cold meat.

PAUL WEBSTER

Stuffed Guard of Honour

Cook's notes

Ask your butcher to chine the racks for you. This entails cutting down the bone between each rib. This will make the stuffed Guard of Honour much easier to carve.

Stuffed guard of honour

62 mins

Standing time: none

This is a spectacular centrepiece for an elegant dinner party.

2 racks of lamb, each weighing about 1.1kg / 2½lb
400g / 14oz can apricots, to garnish (juice reserved)

STUFFING
1 small onion, chopped
50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz dried apricots, chopped
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
grated zest and juice of ½ orange
salt and pepper
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

BROWNING BASTE
30-45ml / 2-3tbls reserved apricot juice
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce

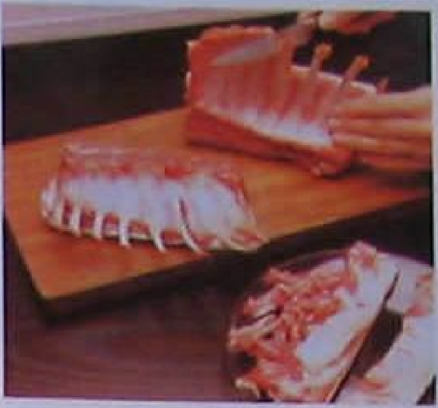
SERVES 6

VARIATION
Replace the apricots with apples, if wished, and use Brazil or chestnuts in place of the walnuts.

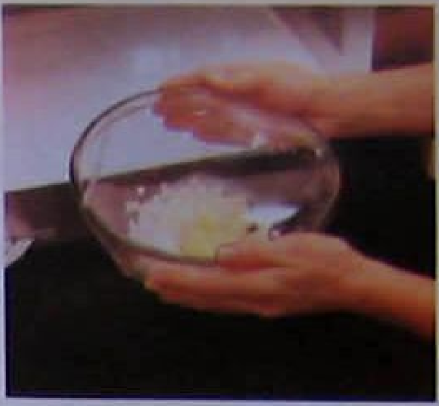
Microtips

To make a gravy to accompany the lamb, strain the juices into a measuring jug and make up to 425ml / ¾pt with water or wine. Stir in 15ml / 3tsp cornflour and ¼ crumbled chicken stock cube. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until boiling. Whisk halfway through cooking, and at the end.

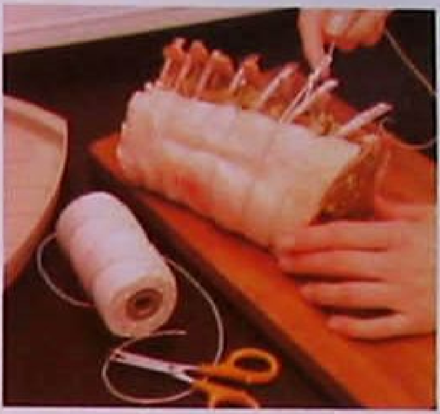
How to microwave Stuffed guard of honour



Prepare *guard of honour by cutting 4cm / 1½in of the meat from top of each rib and scraping the bone clean. Place racks facing each other with bones interlocking.*



Microwave *the onion and butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until soft. Stir in remaining ingredients and stuff the cavity in the centre of the lamb joints.*



Using *fine string, tie the joint around the rib bones and under the base, to keep the shape. Cover the top with cling film to protect any exposed stuffing. Place on a roasting rack.*

Allow *12-14 minutes per 450g / 1lb for rare meat, 13-16 minutes for medium. Mix browning baste and brush over lamb. Microwave at 100% (High) for the first 5 minutes.*

Reduce *power to 50% (Medium) for remaining calculated time. Halfway through the cooking time, drain the juices from the roasting dish and reserve for gravy, see Microtips, left.*

Cook's notes

Packet stuffing mixes, always a useful standby, are available in a wide variety of flavours. They may be used instead of breadcrumbs in many stuffing recipes, provided care is taken not to over-season the mix, or simply made up as directed on the packet. Form into walnut-sized balls and arrange on a greased plate, or press into a greased dish. Dot the top of each ball lightly with butter and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until firm. Take care not to overcook the stuffing or it will soon lose all its moisture and become dried out and hard.

Stuffed Crown Roast of Pork

Stuffed crown roast of pork

99 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is a perfect special-occasion meal or family celebration. Order the cut in advance from your butcher and ask him to prepare it for you. He will split the loin in two, stitch the edges together and secure with a piece of string around the outside.

1 loin of pork of 16 chops, weighing about 3kg / 6lb 10oz
8 cherry tomatoes to garnish

STUFFING
100g / 4oz sausagemeat
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
1 small onion, chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
50g / 2oz rice, cooked
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary

SERVES 8

VARIATION

A stuffed Crown roast of lamb may be prepared and cooked in the same way, but allow 12-14 minutes per 450g / 1lb for rare meat and 13-16 minutes for medium. If wished, use the minced trimmings from the bone ends of the lamb in the stuffing instead of the sausagemeat.

Cook's notes

Using the microwave thermometer is the easiest way to judge accurately when the meat is cooked; however, it is possible to cook meat successfully without one.

Following the cooking times given in the recipe is important. At the end of the cooking time, pierce the thickest part of the pork with a sharp knife. There should be no sign of pink and the juices should also run clear, not pink or red.

Check again after standing time; if the meat is not quite done, return it to the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for a few more minutes.

Chestnut stuffing

6½ mins

Standing time: none

This rich stuffing is ideal for a traditional Christmas turkey. For timings for microwaving whole turkeys see the chart in Part 26, page 709.

6 streaky bacon rashers, rinds removed
225g / 8oz sausagemeat
1 small onion, chopped
450g / 1lb can whole unsweetened chestnuts, drained and roughly chopped
grated zest of ½ lemon
5ml / 1tsp mixed dried herbs
salt and pepper

FOR A 5.4kg / 12lb TURKEY

1 Place the bacon on a plate, cover with two sheets of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until crisp. Transfer to fresh absorbent paper to drain, then crumble into small pieces.

2 Crumble the sausagemeat into a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the meat has lost its pinkness. Break up with a fork and drain on absorbent paper.

3 Clean the bowl and add the onion. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until the onion is tender.

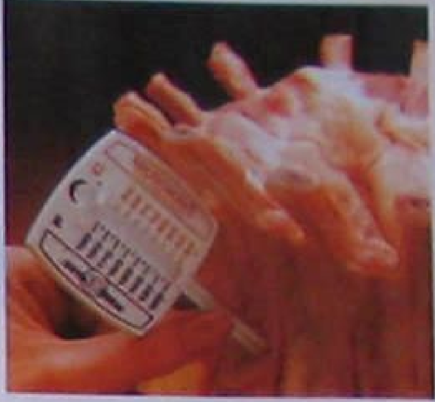
4 Add all the stuffing ingredients to the onion in the bowl and mix together thoroughly. Use to stuff the neck end of the turkey.

VARIATION

Add one peeled, cored and chopped dessert apple to the stuffing for extra fruity flavour.

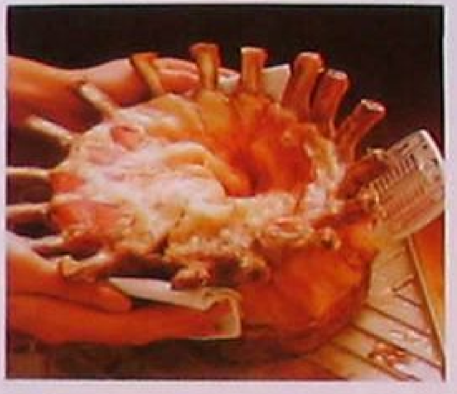
How to microwave Stuffed crown roast of pork

For the stuffing: *microwave sausagemeat at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, then drain. Microwave celery, onion and mushrooms in a clean bowl at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Combine all the stuffing ingredients.*



Insert *microwave thermometer between two ribs; place tip in meaty area on inside of crown, not touching fat or bone. Place crown on a rack, ends down. Calculate cooking time at 15-17 minutes per 450g / 1lb.*

Microwave *the crown roast at 100% (High) for the first 5 minutes of the calculated cooking time. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and continue to microwave for the first half of the calculated time.*



Drain *away any juices which have run out of the meat. Using two thickly folded pieces of absorbent paper, turn the crown roast over carefully so that it rests on its meaty base on the roasting rack.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) until 30 minutes before the end of the calculated cooking time. Drain off the cooking juices and replace the meat on the rack. Spoon the stuffing into the cavity.*

Cover *the crown roast with greaseproof paper or cling film and microwave for the rest of the cooking time, or until the internal temperature reaches 75°C / 170°F. Remove from the cooker.*

Tent *the crown roast loosely with foil and leave to stand for 10 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the meat reaches 80°C / 175°F. The meat will continue to cook during the standing time.*

Transfer *the crown roast to a serving dish, using a fish slice to support the stuffing in the centre. Pierce the skins of the tomatoes and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot.*

Garnish *the meat with the hot cherry tomatoes. Add paper frills on the tip of each chop for special occasions. To serve, carve down between the bones of the chops, and serve some stuffing with each chop.*

Fruity chicken

18¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is a deliciously light, summertime stuffing, ideal for poultry or light meats.

15g / ½oz butter
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp microwave browning
1-1.5kg / 2¼-3¼lb oven-ready chicken

STUFFING
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 small red dessert apple, cored and cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
30ml / 2tbls raisins
2 slices of bread, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1 small onion, chopped
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
grated zest of ½ orange

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-20 seconds until melted. Stir in the soy sauce and microwave browning.

2 Combine all the stuffing ingredients, then use to stuff the neck cavity. Brush the chicken with half the soy sauce basting mixture. Place the chicken, breast side down, on a roasting rack in a shallow dish and cover loosely with a slit roasting bag. Calculate the cooking time, allowing 8-9 minutes per 450g / 1lb.

3 Microwave the chicken at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for the remaining first half of the calculated cooking time.

4 Turn the chicken breast side up and brush with the remaining soy sauce mixture. Replace the roasting bag and microwave for the remaining calculated time.

5 Remove the roasting bag. Cover the cooked chicken loosely with a tent of foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 10 minutes. Serve the chicken and stuffing with a salad and new potatoes.

Fruity Chicken

Sage and onion stuffing

2
mins

Standing time: none

A traditional stuffing which can be used to stuff poultry or served with roast pork. It is also excellent spread over pork chops before microwaving.

2 onions, chopped
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls chopped fresh sage
100g / 4oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
grated zest of ½ lemon
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper

FOR A 5.4kg / 12lb TURKEY

1 Place the onion and butter or margarine in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the onion is soft, stirring once to rearrange.

2 Add the sage, breadcrumbs, lemon zest and egg and mix together thoroughly. Season to taste with salt and pepper before using as a stuffing or coating.

Cook's notes

Stuffings must always be cooled completely before being used, and should not be placed in a bird or joint until just before it goes into the cooker. This reduces the risk of bacteria forming inside the stuffed meat.

Do not pack the stuffing too tightly as it absorbs the meat juices and expands during cooking. Microwave excess stuffing separately for 2 minutes if required.

Microtips

Check poultry is cooked after standing time. To do this pierce the thickest part of the thigh; the juices should run clear. If they are pink, cook the bird for a little longer. Also check that the drumsticks move easily at the joint as an extra test for doneness.

Celery and nut stuffed chicken

21¼
mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Serve this dish with buttered carrots, plain boiled rice and the cooking juices from the chicken.

15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls brown sauce
1kg / 2¼lb oven-ready chicken

STUFFING
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz hazelnut kernels, chopped
75g / 3oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
grated zest and juice of ½ orange
salt and pepper

SERVES 2-4

1 Melt the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 10-20 seconds. Stir in the brown sauce and set aside.

2 For the stuffing, place the celery, onion and butter or margarine in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Add the nuts, breadcrumbs, orange zest and juice and salt and pepper and mix the stuffing thoroughly.

3 Stuff the neck end of the chicken with this mixture, then brush with half the soy browning mixture. Place, breast side down, on a roasting rack in a shallow dish. Cover loosely with a slit roasting bag. Calculate the cooking time at 8-9 minutes per 450g / 1lb.

4 Microwave the chicken at 100% (High) for the first 15 minutes. Reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave for the remaining first half of the calculated cooking time.

5 Turn the chicken breast side up and brush with the remaining browning mixture. Replace the roasting bag. Microwave for the remaining calculated time.

6 Remove the roasting bag. Cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Celery and Nut Stuffed Chicken

Cook's notes

Stuff only the neck end of poultry and not the whole body cavity. Too much stuffing hinders heat conduction and cooking of the bird will be affected.

To help a stuffed bird keep its shape, truss it and secure loose neck skin with wooden cocktail stick.

Canapés

Delicious little canapés make perfect finger food for parties and appetizing nibbles to serve with pre-dinner drinks. Use your microwave to speed preparation time or for reheating while you mingle with your guests.

Canapés — delectable little morsels served on crackers or toast — are ideal for a variety of parties or to serve with drinks before a dinner.

The microwave makes preparation especially easy, softening and cooking, crisping and thawing. Cook whole canapés beforehand so they are ready to take straight through to your guests, or reheat them just before serving.

A contrast of textures is important, so use soft toppings with crunchy vegetables on crisp crackers or toast as a base.

Clockwise from top left: *Devilled Bacon; Pizza Nibbles; Cheese Savouries; Party Stuffed Mushrooms; Chicken and Ham Treats*

Dressing up canapés

A dish of canapés should look and taste good. The following will add an appetizing finish.

- Spring onion or celery tassels
- Chopped herbs or nuts
- Cucumber, lemon or orange twists (see page 887)
- Cucumber or carrot curls
- Sprigs of parsley or mint
- Lemon or orange butterflies
- Radish or tomato roses

Devilled bacon

4½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 egg
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
good pinch of cayenne pepper
5ml / 1tsp cider vinegar
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
6 rashers of streaky bacon, rinds removed
120ml / 8tbls white breadcrumbs

MAKES 18-24 CANAPES

1 In a small bowl, beat together the egg, mustard, cayenne, vinegar and soy sauce.
2 Dip each piece of bacon in the egg mixture and then coat all over in breadcrumbs.
3 Place on a double layer of absorbent paper and cover with another layer. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-6 minutes, or until the bacon is crisp. Stand for 2-3 minutes then cut each rasher into pieces.

Cheese savouries

4½ mins

Standing time: none

The pepper sauce gives these biscuits quite a hot flavour. If you prefer a milder taste, cut down or omit the sauce.

75g / 3oz butter
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
several drops of hot pepper sauce

MAKES 36 SAVOURIES

1 Soften the butter by microwaving, covered, at 30% (Low) for 25 seconds. Add the cheese and beat together until blended. Stir in the flour, salt and hot pepper sauce to make a soft dough. Chill, uncovered, for 1 hour.
2 Turn the dough out on to a well floured surface and sprinkle with flour, then roll out to a 30 × 15cm / 12 × 6in rectangle. Trim the edges with a sharp knife, then cut into 1 × 7.5cm / ½ × 3in strips.
3 Line a microwave baking tray with non-stick paper. Arrange half the cheese strips on the paper, leaving even spaces between them and making sure that they do not touch.
4 Place on an inverted plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until just firm. Allow to rest for 2 minutes, then carefully transfer to a wire rack. Repeat this procedure with the remaining cheese mixture. Store the cheese savouries in an airtight container or in cling film as soon as they are cold.

Pizza nibbles

1½ mins

Standing time: none

36 small Melba toasts or round crackers
tomato ketchup for spreading
75g / 3oz salami, thinly sliced
75g / 3oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
5ml / 1tsp dried basil

MAKES 36 CANAPES

1 Place 12 toast rounds on a paper plate and spread with a little ketchup. Top with a third of the salami and cheese, then sprinkle with basil.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until the cheese is just melting. Give the plate a half turn once during cooking. Serve immediately.
3 Repeat with the remaining toast rounds, cooking them in two batches.

Cook's notes

These canapés should be served straight away, so pass the first batch among your guests before you cook the rest.

Microtips

When microwaving crackers or toast with toppings, arrange them on a paper plate or absorbent paper to keep them crisp.

Party stuffed mushrooms

3 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz large cap mushrooms
25g / 1oz butter
½ celery stalk, finely chopped
½ small onion, finely chopped
75ml / 5tbls dried breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
pinch of dried oregano
salt

Chicken and Ham Treats

SERVES 6-8

1 Remove and chop the mushroom stems. Combine the stems, butter, celery and onion in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, or until the vegetables are tender-crisp, stirring once.
2 Stir in breadcrumbs, Worcestershire sauce, parsley, oregano and salt. Use this mixture to fill the mushroom caps. Arrange the mushrooms on a large plate lined with absorbent paper, placing the largest ones to the outside of the plate so they receive most energy.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes. Turn twice during cooking. Serve hot or cold.

Chicken and ham treats

1½ mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz can flaked chicken*
75g / 3oz cooked ham, chopped
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls chopped spring onion
10 drops of hot pepper sauce
36 crisp crackers

MAKES 36 CANAPES

1 Combine the chicken, ham, cheese, onion and sauce, mix well and chill for 30 minutes.
2 Arrange 12 crackers on a paper plate. Cover each with a little of the chicken and ham mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-90 seconds, or until the cheese melts and the crackers are hot, giving the plate a half turn after 20 seconds. Serve immediately while you repeat with remaining mix.

Swiss ham rosettes

½ min

Standing time: none

The topping can be made ahead and stored in the refrigerator.

½ × 400g / 14oz packet fondue mix
60ml / 4tbls ground almonds
50g / 2oz Red Leicester cheese, grated
100g / 4oz light ham pâté
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
pinch of cayenne pepper
36 thin wholemeal crackers
sliced almonds (optional)

MAKES 36 ROSETTES

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND finely chopped cooked chicken

1 Place the fondue mix in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until slightly softened. Mix in almonds, grated cheese, ham pâté, parsley and cayenne. Beat until smooth.

2 Put the mixture in a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle. Pipe a rosette on to each cracker. Top with an almond slice if liked. Serve with white wine.

Choice chicken canapés

6½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb boneless chicken breast
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter
150g / 5oz cream cheese
100g / 4oz drained, crushed canned pineapple
15ml / 1tbls chopped salted cashew nuts
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
about 15 slices pumpernickel or rye bread

GARNISH
cucumber twists (see Cook's notes)
few sprigs of parsley

MAKES 30 CANAPES

1 Place the chicken breasts in a medium-sized casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink. Cool, then drain and remove the skin. Chop the flesh into small pieces.

2 In a medium-sized bowl, combine the celery, green pepper, onion and butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes, or until tender-crisp.

3 Stir in the cream cheese, pineapple, nuts, chopped parsley, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

4 Spread the slices of pumpernickel bread with the chicken mixture. Cut each slice in half and garnish.

RAY DUNS

Cook's notes

To make the cucumber twists, cut wafer-thin slices of unpeeled cucumber, then make a cut from the edge of each slice to the centre. Twist the cut edges in opposite directions and use as a garnish.

Microtips

If the cream cheese is cold and too hard to mix, soften it by microwaving it at 50% (Medium) for 40-50 seconds, or until it is easy to mix, but not actually warm or starting to melt.

Spicy party wedges

17½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

150g / 5oz strong plain flour
salt
75ml / 3fl oz cold water

TOPPING
100g / 4oz minced beef
½ small onion, finely chopped
1.5ml / ¼tsp chilli powder
large pinch of dried oregano
large pinch of garlic salt
1 large tomato, chopped
¼ green pepper, seeded and chopped
25g / 1oz Cheddar cheese, grated
25g / 1oz Red Leicester cheese, grated

MAKES 13 WEDGES

1 Sift the flour with the salt. Sprinkle over the water and mix to a dough. Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and knead briefly until it is smooth, then roll out to a 20cm / 8in round.

2 Line a microwave baking tray with absorbent paper. Place the pastry circle on the paper and prick it in several places with a fork. Cover with another layer of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the pastry is dry, turning several times. Leave to 'settle' for 3 minutes, then carefully transfer to a cooling rack.

3 To make the topping, microwave the beef and onion in a casserole at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink. Stir the topping once during cooking to break up the meat.

4 Drain the fat from the meat, then stir in the chilli powder, oregano and garlic salt. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 2-3 minutes, or until the flavours are blended. Stir in the tomato.

5 Heat a microwave griddle at

Spicy Party Wedges

100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Spoon the topping mixture over the pastry base. Sprinkle the chopped green pepper and the grated cheese over the top.

6 Transfer the round carefully to the hot microwave griddle and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until the cheeses have melted. Remove from the griddle, stand for 2 minutes, then cut into wedges and serve.

Cook's notes

Using a microwave griddle, sometimes called a pizza browner, guarantees a crisp crust. If you don't have a griddle, cook the topped pastry base on a large plate lined with a couple of layers of absorbent paper.

Fruit in syrup

Give fruit a really special treatment and poach it in a light sugar syrup. Serve hot or cold as a delicious dessert or a fruity accompaniment to meat and poultry.

Fresh fruit microwaved in a simple sugar syrup is mouth-wateringly tender and juicy. It can be served immediately, hot or cold, or stored in the refrigerator for up to four days, ready to turn into all sorts of delicious desserts.

Choose fruit that is fresh, sound and perfectly ripe — neither too hard nor too soft. For combinations, choose fruit of a similar size and ripeness — this will ensure even cooking.

Make the syrup in a heatproof jug or bowl large enough to ensure that the syrup will not boil over. Similarly, make sure the bowl in which you microwave the fruit is large enough, too.

For a speedy dessert serve fruit in syrup on its own or topped with ice cream, cream or yoghurt. Alternatively, turn it into a family pudding (see Serving suggestions, page 892). Some fruit in syrup can be served as a chutney or relish. Citrus fruits are best for this.

Rosy Plums

Light sugar syrup

4
mins

Standing time: none

This syrup is suitable for poaching most fruit. If you have a sweet tooth or for tart fruit such as gooseberries or rhubarb, you may prefer to use a stronger sugar syrup which is thicker and sweeter (see Variations).

100g / 4oz sugar
275ml / ½pt cold water

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

To prepare syrup: *microwave the sugar and liquid in a heatproof jug at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until boiling, stirring three times.*

VARIATIONS

Red wine syrup: prepare as Light Sugar Syrup but use red wine instead of the water.

Honey syrup: replace 50g / 2oz of the sugar with 50ml / 3½tbls clear honey.

Boozy syrup: use 30ml / 2tbls fruit liqueur made up to 275ml / ½pt with an appropriate fruit juice, such as apple or pineapple.

Spiced syrup: add 1 cinnamon stick, 4-6 whole cloves or 2-3 allspice berries and strain the syrup before using. This is particularly good with apples.

Strong sugar syrup: increase the sugar to 175g / 6oz.

Microwave times for poaching fruit in syrup

FRUIT	QUANTITY	TIME AT 100% HIGH	STANDING TIME	PROCEDURE
Apples (cooking) sliced	900g / 2lb	6 mins	5 mins	Peel, core, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
Apples (eating) quartered	450g / 1lb	5 mins	5 mins	Peel and core, then quarter
Apples (tart eating) sliced	450g / 1lb	3 mins	5 mins	Peel and core, then cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
Blackberries	450g / 1lb	2 mins	5 mins	Pick over. Rinse, drain and pat dry with absorbent paper
Nectarines	8	6 mins	5 mins	Skin. Prick to the stone with skewer. Add lemon juice to syrup
Oranges sliced	4	3 mins	5 mins	Scrub well, dry. Slice into 6mm / ¼in pieces
Peaches whole	4 large (approx 700g / 1½lb)	4 mins	5 mins	Skin. Prick to the stone with skewer
Peaches halved	4 large (approx 700g / 1½lb)	3 mins	5 mins	Skin, then cut in half and remove stones
Pears whole	900g / 2lb	5 mins	5 mins	Peel. Prick to core with a skewer
Pears halved	900g / 2lb	3 mins	5 mins	Peel. Cut in half and remove cores
Pears (cooking) whole	900g / 2lb	10 mins	5 mins	Peel. Prick to core with skewer
Pineapple cut into bite-sized pieces	900g / 2lb	5 mins	5 mins	Peel, quarter and core. Cut into bite-sized pieces
Plums whole	450g / 1lb	3 mins	5 mins	Prick to the stone with a fork
Plums halved	450g / 1lb	2 mins	5 mins	Cut in half and remove stones
Raspberries	450g / 1lb	1 min	5 mins	Pick over. Wash and pat dry with absorbent paper
Rhubarb	450g / 1lb	4 mins	5 mins	Trim. Cut into 5cm / 2in lengths

How to microwave fruit in syrup

Prepare fruit *(see chart) and arrange in a large, heatproof bowl. Pour the hot syrup over the prepared fruit. Cover bowl with cling film rolled back at one edge.*

Microwave *for recommended time (see chart) until tender, stir once. Serve hot or cold. To store: cool, then refrigerate, covered, for up to four days.*

Rosy plums

14½
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

550g / 1¼lb whole firm plums

SYRUP
100g / 4oz sugar
225ml / 8fl oz red grape juice
30ml / 2tbls kirsch
toasted flaked almonds

SERVES 4-6

1 Prick each plum two or three times with a fork. Place in a large heatproof bowl.

2 Place the sugar and grape juice in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until boiling; stir three times to ensure the sugar dissolves.

3 Pour the syrup and kirsch over the plums, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir then reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 4½-5 minutes. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

4 Serve hot or cold, sprinkling over the almonds before serving.

VARIATION
Stir 1-2 sliced bananas into the plums just before serving.

Microtips

When you need just a few almonds to decorate a dish, toast them conventionally. (The quantity is too small to absorb the microwaves.) Sprinkle over just before serving.

Spiced oranges

14
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

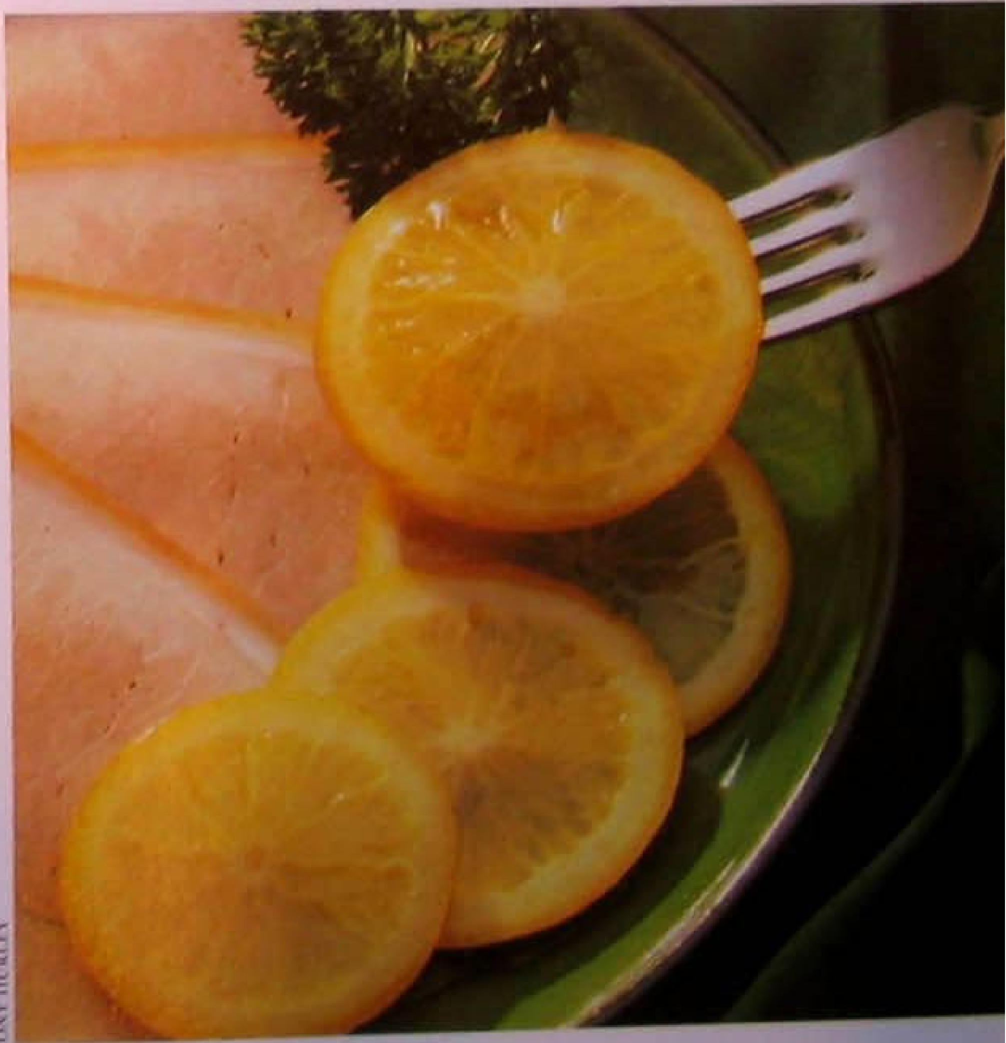
This makes a delicious accompaniment to meat, especially rich meats like ham.

6 thin-skinned oranges
1 cinnamon stick
4 cloves
275ml / ½pt hot light sugar syrup (see page 890)

MAKES 900g-1.4kg / 2-3lb

1 Scrub the oranges and slice into 6mm / ¼in thick rings. Place in a large heatproof bowl with the cinnamon stick and cloves.

2 Pour over the sugar syrup. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, stirring once. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.



Spiced Oranges

TONY HURLEY

Microtips

Cooking time depends on the variety and ripeness of the fruit. Check for doneness at the end of microwaving time. The fruit should be just tender when tested with a sharp knife. Remember it continues to cook during standing.

Cook's notes

Sugar dissolves much faster if it is warmed before being added to liquid. Heat 100g / 4oz sugar in the microwave at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes, 175g / 6oz for 3½ minutes stirring twice. Take extra care not to overheat the sugar or it may burn — watch carefully toward the end of microwaving.

Tropical Kiwi and Pineapple

Tropical kiwi and pineapple

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

7 firm kiwi fruit
1 pineapple (about 900g / 2lb)
275ml / ½pt hot Light Sugar Syrup (see recipe page 890)

SERVES 4

1 Peel the kiwi fruit, cut into thick slices and place in a large heatproof bowl. Remove the peel and the core from the pineapple and remove any brown 'eyes'. Cut into bite-sized pieces and add to the bowl.

2 Pour the hot syrup over the fruit, making sure the fruit is well submerged. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir, then reduce the power setting to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 2 minutes. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Microtips

Use a wooden cocktail stick or fine skewer to prick fruit with smooth, shiny skin, such as plums, gooseberries and apples, if cooking them whole. Otherwise, the build-up of steam within the fruit during microwaving will cause the skins to burst. Cover the bowl of fruit in syrup with cling film or a lid to prevent splattering. Roll cling film back enough at one edge to make stirring or turning the fruit during microwaving easier.

Serving suggestions for fruit in syrup

● Spoon the hot or cold fruit in syrup over ice cream, frozen yoghurt or sorbet for a speedy dessert.

● Use for a fruit pie or crumble filling but thicken the syrup with a little arrowroot. Allow 20ml / 4tsp arrowroot to each 275ml / ½pt syrup and blend with 15-30ml / 1-2tbls cold water first. Remember to use a deep dish for cooking crumbles to avoid the fruit filling boiling over.

● Drain the fruit and arrange neatly in a cooked pastry case or sponge flan case. Thicken a little of the syrup with arrowroot and brush over the fruit to glaze (see Back cover, part 26).

● Include in fruit salads with fresh seasonal fruit. Serve with whipped cream, ice cream, soured cream or yoghurt.

● Purée in a blender to make a fruit mousse or a sweet soufflé.

● Serve as an unusual garnish for roast meat, or as an accompaniment to cold cuts. Kumquats are delicious with glazed ham or duck. Plums complement roast poultry, spiced oranges are a good foil for fatty meat like pork or rich game birds.

Italian peaches

9
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 large ripe peaches, pricked and skinned (see chart)
50g / 2oz sugar
50ml / 2fl oz water
12.5ml / 2½tsp arrowroot
250ml / 9fl oz medium sweet semi-sparkling red wine
whipped double cream to serve

SERVES 4

1 Arrange peaches in a fairly deep bowl. Place the sugar and water in a jug. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring twice to make sure the sugar has completely dissolved before the syrup boils.

2 Cover peaches with boiling syrup. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring once during cooking. Turn peaches over, cover and stand for 5 minutes.

3 Strain off the syrup and allow to cool slightly. Blend arrowroot with 15ml / 1tbls wine. Add 30ml / 2tbls of the warm reserved syrup, stir well, then stir in remaining syrup. Cook on 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until thickened and clear, stirring after 1 minute.

4 Pour thickened syrup over peaches, allow to cool, cover, then chill in the refrigerator for several hours. Put the remaining wine to chill in the refrigerator.

5 Stir in the remaining chilled wine just before serving. This will make the syrup froth and sparkle. Serve the peaches immediately with whipped cream while the syrup is still frothing.

Cook's notes

Some fruits, particularly peaches, nectarines and pears, tend to discolour after poaching. Adding a little lemon juice to the syrup, and turning the fruit over frequently during cooking so that it is well coated with syrup, helps keep it a good colour.

Liqueur-laced kumquats

11
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

These tiny citrus fruit are eaten whole — rind and all. Serve them with roast duck or ham. They also make a welcome gift: when cold, transfer kumquats to a wide-necked jar using a slotted spoon pack down tightly, then pour in the syrup to cover. Cover jars securely and store in refrigerator.

700g / 1½lb kumquats
1 cinnamon stick
6 whole cloves
275ml / ½pt hot Light Sugar Syrup (see recipe, page 890)
30ml / 2tbls orange liqueur

MAKES 700g / 1½lb

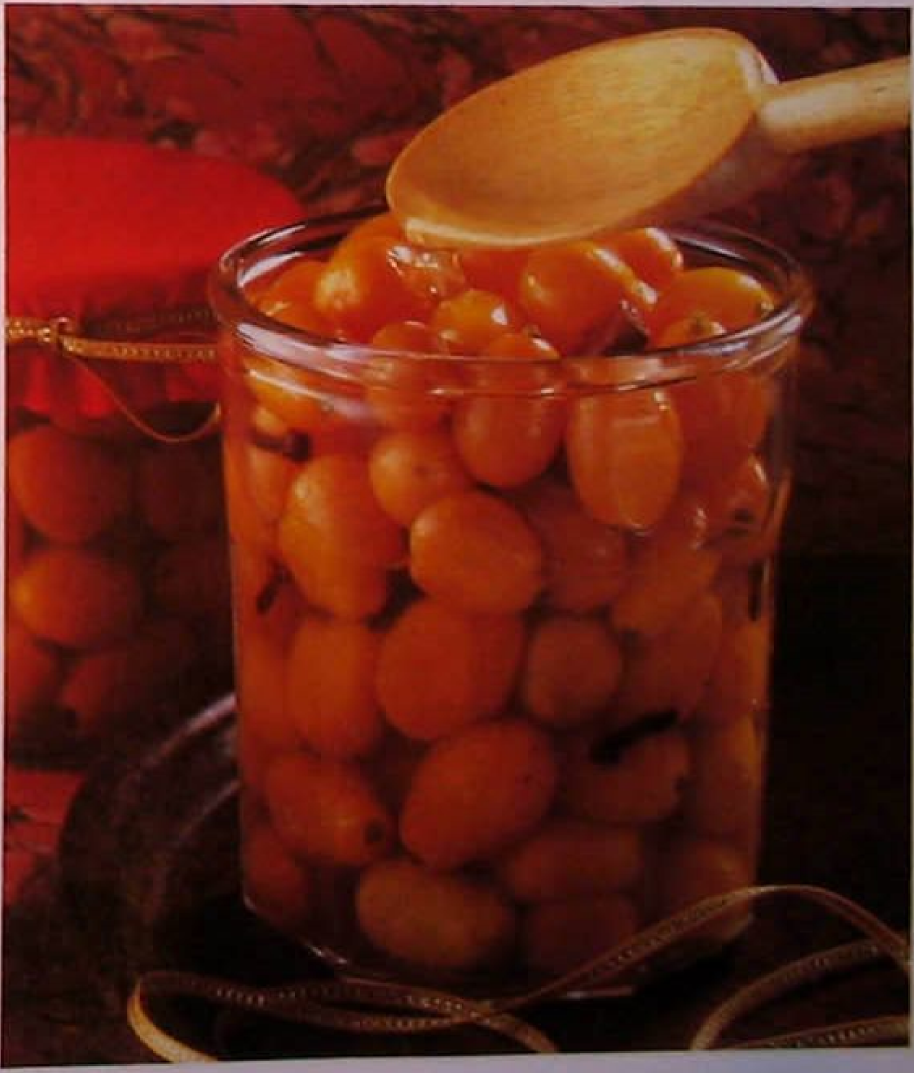
1 Prick each kumquat three or four times with a fine skewer or needle. Place in a large heatproof bowl with the cinnamon stick and cloves.

2 Pour over the hot sugar syrup. Add the orange liqueur. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Stir, then reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 3 minutes. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Cook's notes

Most fruit cooked in syrup keeps for up to four days, tightly covered, in the refrigerator, but peaches and nectarines are best eaten at once. Make sure the fruit stays submerged in the syrup. If necessary, lay a piece of cling film directly over the top of the fruit before covering the container, or weight it down with a plate.

Liqueur-laced Kumquats



CHRIS KNAGGS

Meatloaves in minutes

Here's a selection of the speediest meatloaves ever! Served hot (or cold) with vegetables or crusty bread and salads, they are delicious and filling enough to please all tastes.

A meatloaf is basically a tasty balance of minced meat, flavourings, beaten eggs and breadcrumbs — although the variations on this theme are almost endless. In the main, a meatloaf makes an economical dish that is perfect for a well-balanced family meal. But one of the more specialized ones, such as the Italian Meatloaf, shaped like a Swiss roll and with a gorgeous melted cheese filling, is good enough for supper guests.

Use only lean meats when making meatloaves (whether minced beef, ham or pork) otherwise the shrinkage during cooking spoils the appearance and may cause the meat to overcook and become dry. The beaten egg and breadcrumbs in these recipes help bind the meat mixture together during cooking and also makes the cooked meatloaf easier to slice.

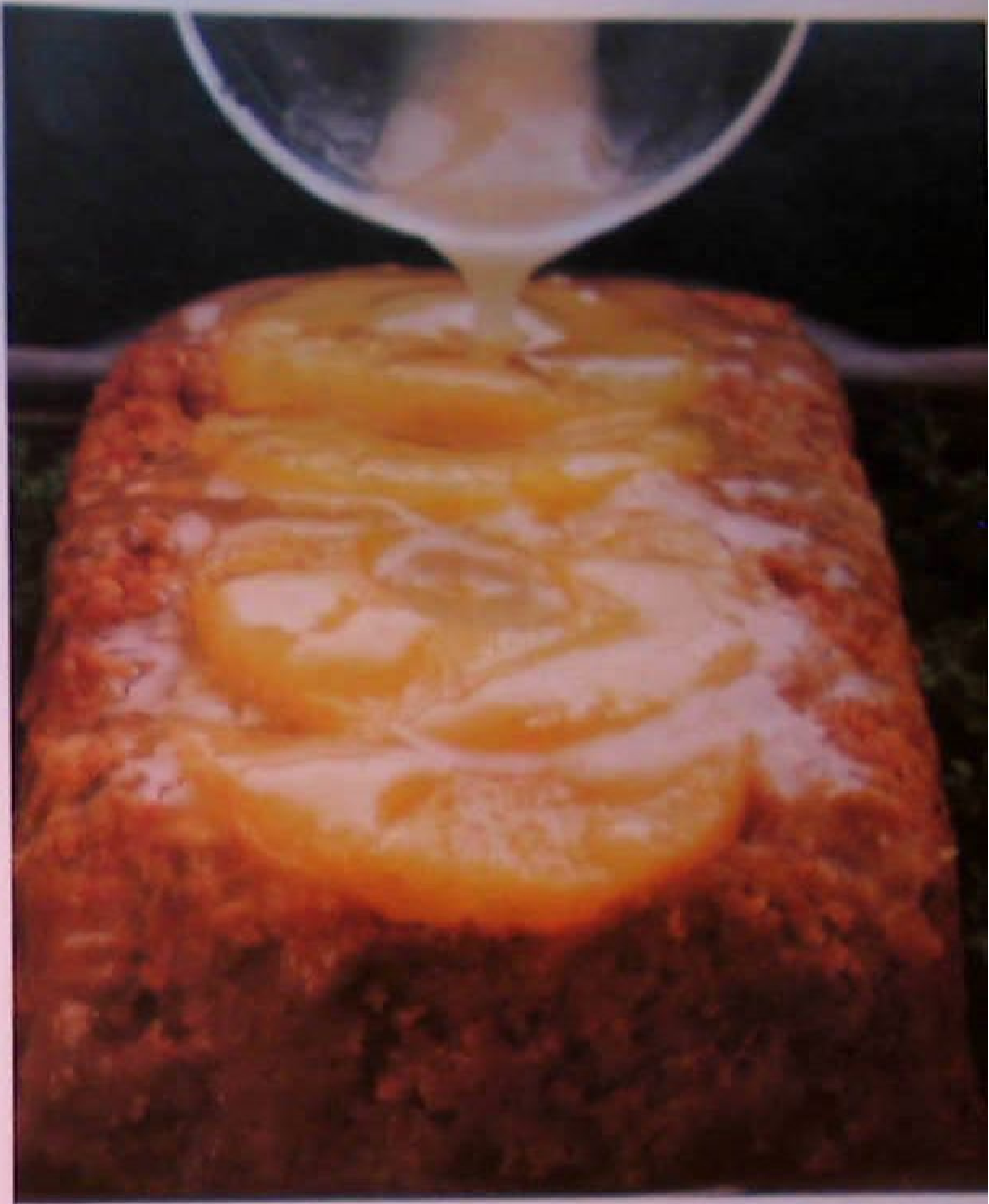
Remember to keep additional flavouring or filling ingredients uniform in size (unless otherwise stated in the recipe) to ensure everything cooks in the same amount of time. Flavourings can be as varied as you like, so experiment with herbs, spices, garlic and other personal favourites.

Serve meatloaves with baked potatoes and a selection of vegetables, or with crusty bread and salads. Remember, too, that leftovers are delicious cold and make tasty sandwich fillings.

Italian Meatloaf

Freezer notes

All the meatloaves here freeze successfully for up to a month. Cool completely, then wrap and freeze. To serve, thaw at 20-30% (Defrost) for 20-30 minutes; serve cold with salads and pickles.



Glazed Ham and Pineapple Loaf

Cook's notes

To check whether meatloaves are cooked, insert a meat thermometer into the centre of the loaf (before standing) to check internal temperature: it should read between 145-150°C / 290-300°F.

Remember to remove the thermometer if you need to microwave the meatloaf a few minutes more. If you do not have a meat thermometer, insert a fine skewer into the centre of the loaf and press the surface. If the juices run clear the meatloaf is cooked. If juices are still pink, microwave the meatloaf for a further 1-2 minutes and test again.

Italian meatloaf

17 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb lean minced beef
50g / 2oz dried breadcrumbs
150ml / ¼pt tomato sauce
1 egg, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

TOPPING

2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
150ml / ¼pt tomato sauce
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
parsley sprigs, *to garnish*

SERVES 6

1 Mix together the minced beef, breadcrumbs, tomato sauce, egg, oregano and seasoning to taste until thoroughly combined.

2 Turn the mixture on to damp greaseproof paper and, using wet hands, pat into a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in rectangle. Sprinkle with the grated Mozzarella cheese, leaving a 2.5cm / 1in border all the way round. Roll up neatly (see Cook's notes, right).

3 Place roll, join-side down, in a 23 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in loaf dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and cook for 10 minutes. To check whether meatloaf is cooked, see Cook's notes, above.

4 Cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Drain off liquid from the dish, then prepare the topping. Mix the oregano with the tomato sauce and pour over the meatloaf. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes to heat the sauce. Garnish with parsley sprigs and serve hot.

Microtips

This loaf can be made in advance and left to cool. Reheat at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, before garnishing with parsley.

Cook's notes

Wet hands make patting the meat into shape far easier and also prevent the meat sticking to your fingers. To shape the meatloaf at step 2: start at one short side and lift the greaseproof paper until the meat begins to roll fairly tightly. Peel back the paper to keep it from sticking during the cooking process. Continue lifting the paper and peeling it back until the meat is neatly rolled up like a Swiss roll. Press the join in the meatloaf really well to seal and prevent it opening during cooking, before placing the loaf, join-side down in the dish.

Glazed ham and pineapple loaf

18½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
220g / 7¾oz can pineapple slices, drained and with juice reserved
350g / 12oz smoked bacon, minced*
350g / 12oz lean pork, minced
40g / 1½oz fresh breadcrumbs*
½ onion, finely chopped
3.5ml / ¾tsp mustard powder
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
2 eggs, beaten
150ml / ¼pt milk
salt and pepper

GLAZE
reserved pineapple juice
10ml / 2tsp cornflour

SERVES 6

1 Sprinkle the sugar over the base of a 23 × 12cm / 9 × 5in loaf dish. Arrange the pineapple slices, overlapping, along the length of the dish. Mix together all the remaining ingredients except the pineapple juice and cornflour for the glaze, until thoroughly combined. Press the mixture into the dish and level the surface.

2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 12-15 minutes, or until the loaf shrinks away from the sides of the dish, rotating dish quarter turn twice during cooking. To check whether meatloaf is cooked see Cook's notes, page 895.

3 Cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the glaze. Make up the reserved pineapple juice to 150ml / ¼pt with water, if necessary. In a small bowl, smoothly blend the cornflour with a little pineapple juice, then stir in the remaining juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until thickened, whisking twice.

4 Turn out the meatloaf on to a plate. Pour the sauce over the top. Serve hot with boiled potatoes and green beans or cold with a colourful rice salad.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Substitute smoked ham. Use ⅔ cup breadcrumbs.

Saucy Meatloaf

Saucy meatloaf

17 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

700g / 1½lb lean minced beef
100g / 4oz fresh breadcrumbs
60ml / 4tbls milk
2 eggs, beaten
1 small onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper

TO FINISH
150ml / ¼pt tomato sauce
parsley sprigs, to garnish

SERVES 6

How to microwave Saucy meatloaf

Combine *all the ingredients, except the tomato sauce and parsley, and mix well. Press into a 23 × 12cm / 9 × 5in loaf dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and cook for 10 minutes; rotating a half turn.*

Remove *the meatloaf from cooker when centre is firm and meat is no longer pink. To check whether the meatloaf is cooked see Cook's notes, page 895. Cover with a tent of foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5-10 minutes to complete the cooking.*

Heat *the tomato sauce in a jug at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until hot. Drain off any liquid from dish and pour the tomato sauce over the meatloaf. Decorate with parsley sprigs and serve hot with vegetables.*

Six-layer meatloaf

17 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

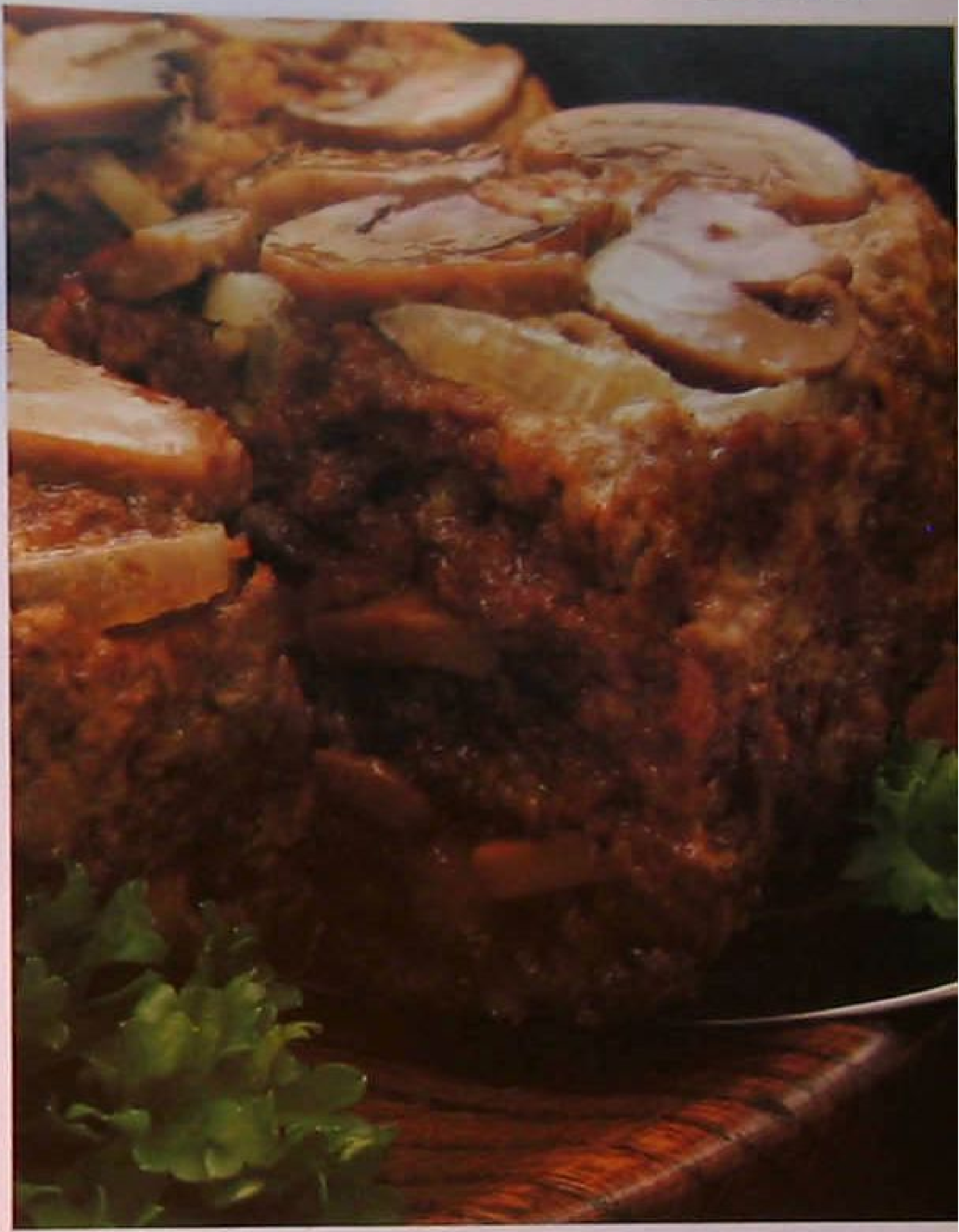
700g / 1½lb lean minced beef
2 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls dried breadcrumbs
1 small onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce

FILLING
150ml / ¼pt water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz sage and onion or other seasoned stuffing mix

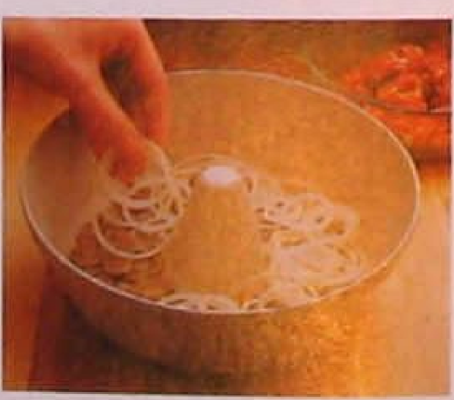
TOPPING
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, thinly sliced

SERVES 6

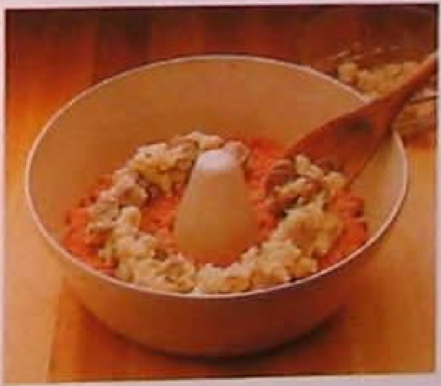
1 Combine the beef, eggs, breadcrumbs, onion and Worcestershire sauce in a bowl and mix well. Divide equally into three.
2 Put the water and butter into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until boiling. Stir in the stuffing mix.
3 Assemble the loaf as shown in the steps below, then microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and cook for 10 minutes. To check whether cooked, see Cook's notes, page 895.
4 Cover with foil (shiny side in); stand for 5 minutes. Turn out and garnish with parsley.



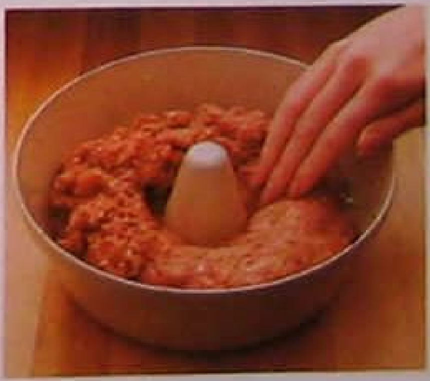
How to assemble Six-layer meatloaf



Place *half the sliced mushrooms in the base of a 2.3L / 4pt ring mould and cover with the onion rings. Top with one-third of the meatloaf mixture. Press down firmly to level.*



Stir *the remaining mushrooms into the stuffing mixture. Spoon half this stuffing mixture over the meat in ring mould, leaving a 2.5cm / 1in border on either side.*



Top *with another third of the meatloaf mixture; press down firmly. Spoon over remaining stuffing, leaving a border as before. Top with remaining meatloaf mixture; press edges well to seal.*

Oriental meatloaf

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
225g / 9oz can mixed Chinese vegetables in salted water, drained
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
50g / 2oz dried breadcrumbs
1 tomato, chopped

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Press the mixture into a 15 × 9cm / 6 × 3½in loaf dish and level surface.

2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, rotating dish quarter turn twice during cooking. Reduce the power to 70% (Medium-High) and continue to cook for a further 5-8 minutes, rotating dish quarter turn twice. To check whether meatloaf is cooked, see Cook's Notes, page 895.

3 Cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Garnish with sliced tomatoes and parsley sprigs and serve hot with boiled rice.

Above: *Bacon-wrapped Mini Loaves*
Below: *Oriental Meatloaf*

Bacon-wrapped mini loaves

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
40g / 1½oz breadcrumbs*
30ml / 2tbls milk
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls tomato sauce
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
7.5ml / 1½tsp curry powder

SERVES 4

1 Put the bacon on double thickness absorbent paper and cover with another two sheets. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes only (so the bacon is slightly underdone). Set aside.

2 Put the green pepper and onion in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes or until just tender.

3 Add the remaining ingredients to green pepper mixture and mix thoroughly until well combined. Divide in half and shape each portion into a 15 × 9cm / 6 × 3½in loaf. Wrap two rashers of bacon around each loaf and secure with wooden cocktail sticks.

4 Place on a microwave roasting rack, cover with double thickness absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, rotating quarter turn twice during cooking.

5 Cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5 minutes.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
⅔ cup breadcrumbs

Sausagemeat loaf

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 tomato, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
450g / 1lb pork sausagemeat
225g / 8oz dried breadcrumbs
pepper
100g / 4oz cooked ham, finely minced

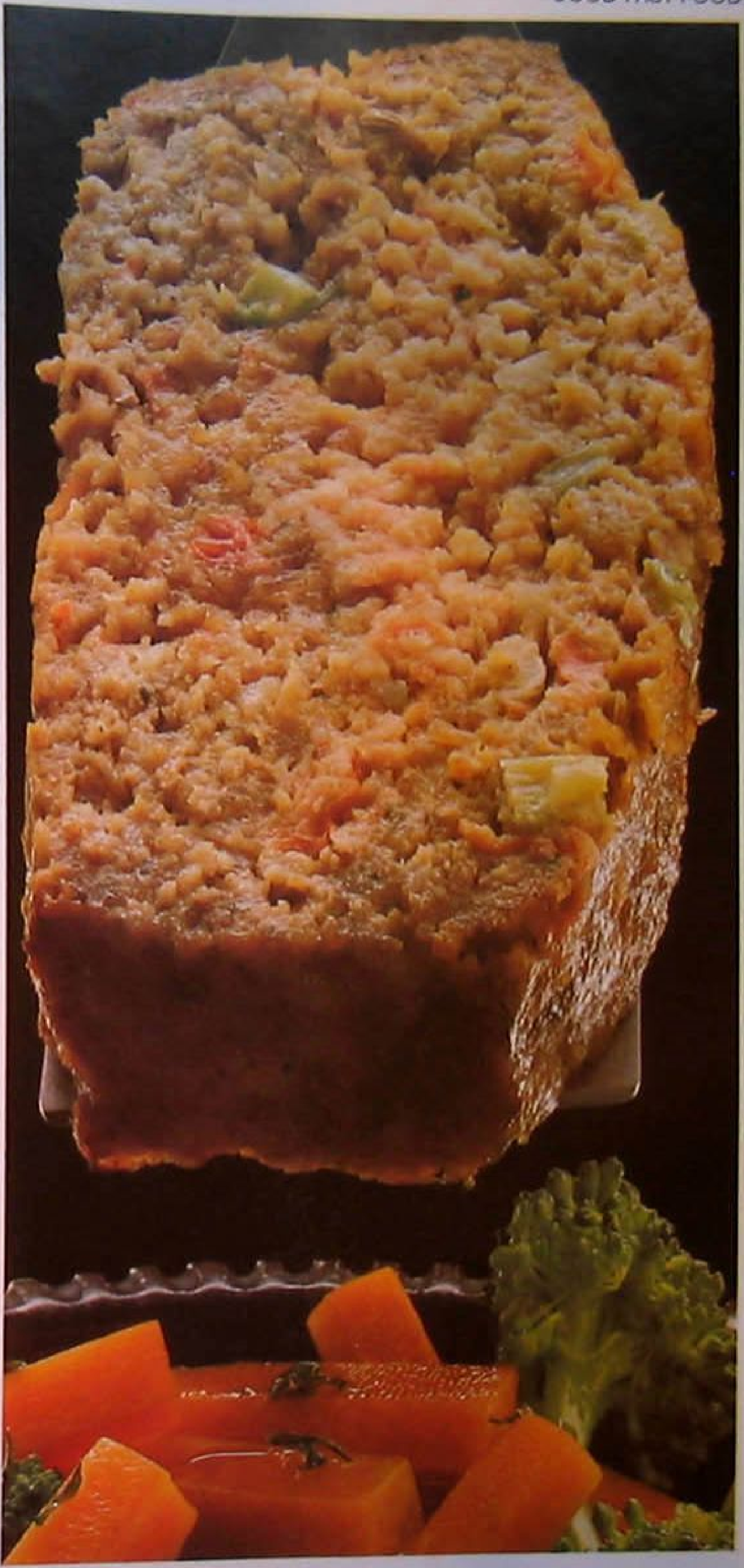
SERVES 6

1 Put the tomato, onion and celery in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes until tender; stir once.

2 Add the remaining ingredients, except the ham, and mix thoroughly until well combined. Press half the mixture into a 23 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in loaf dish and level the surface. Cover with the ham and spoon the remaining meat mixture on top and press down firmly.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Rotate dish half a turn, then reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and continue cooking for a further 10 minutes, rotating the dish several times during cooking. To check whether meatloaf is cooked, see Cook's Notes, page 895.

4 Cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Serve hot with crusty bread, mustard pickle or salad.



STAR RECIPE

Herb soufflé

For a deliciously impressive main course that is prepared and cooked in the microwave in under 30 minutes, a soufflé must surely rate highly, especially when as wonderfully moist and fluffy as this one.

This superb microwaved soufflé makes a marvellously impressive dish. Unlike a conventionally cooked soufflé, it does not have a crisp crusty surface; instead it is soft and moist throughout, with a light frothy top above the spongy bottom half.

Don't be deterred from making a hot soufflé; in the microwave it really is not difficult, provided you follow a few basic rules. Once you have mastered the art, it makes an excellent standby for coping with unexpected supper guests — in style.

This soufflé recipe consists of two main elements — a thick white cheese and herb sauce, enriched with egg yolks for substance and flavour; plus whisked, softly peaking egg whites for a successful high-rise result. Remember to stir a tablespoon of the egg white into the sauce to lighten the texture before very gently folding in the remainder. Use a large metal spoon and a figure of eight motion for this to cut and lift the two mixtures until evenly combined together.

This process is important, as a heavy-handed approach knocks out all the air previously whisked in and the texture and rise of the soufflé will be spoiled.

Herb soufflé

29½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt warm milk
100g / 4oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
6 small eggs, separated
pinch of salt and cayenne pepper
5ml / 1tsp cream of tartar
paprika, for dusting

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the butter in a 2.3L / 4pt soufflé dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until melted.

2 Stir in the flour and gradually beat in the warm milk with a wire whisk until smooth and evenly combined.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until the sauce is thick and smooth, whisking twice during cooking.

4 Stir in the cheeses and herbs, then whisk in the egg yolks, one at a time, until evenly blended. Add the seasoning and set aside.

5 In a large clean bowl, whisk the egg whites and cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Stir 15ml / 1tbls of the egg white into sauce mixture, then lightly fold remaining egg whites into the sauce, using a large metal spoon. Sprinkle the surface of the mixture evenly with paprika.

6 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 25 minutes or until the surface of the soufflé is just moist and the soufflé 'trembles' slightly when the dish is shaken gently. Rotate the dish a half-turn three times during cooking to give an evenly risen result.

7 Serve immediately with hot buttered toast or a tossed green salad and warm crusty bread, if preferred.

Microtips

This microwaved soufflé recipe is particularly easy to make and cuts down considerably on the washing up, as every stage (apart from the whisking of the egg whites) is conveniently carried out in the soufflé dish itself. Don't worry if the top of the soufflé splits during cooking — it still remains moist and absolutely delicious.

Cook's notes

Use the correct size soufflé dish or round glass casserole to ensure a good result. If your microwave has pulse power, then the soufflé will not rise to such a height.

How to microwave Herb soufflé

During *the microwaving at 30% (Low) the soufflé mixture may rise higher on one side than the other — this is usual.*

It is *important to rotate the soufflé dish so that the higher risen side is in the position occupied by the lowest area during cooking.*

The rise *of the soufflé evens out during microwaving, provided the three rotations are carried out during the stated cooking time.*

Scallops

Scallops make a truly special meal. Their moist, succulent flesh is ideally suited to microwave cooking — making them as easy to cook as they are delicious to eat.

Scallops are simplicity itself to cook. The microwave's moist cooking method means the scallops can retain their succulence and fine flavour.

When buying scallops, look out for white moist-looking flesh, with a rich pinky-orange coloured coral or roe. Since the shells are difficult to open, scallops are usually sold ready opened. The fishmonger can supply the shell too, if it is needed for the recipe. Scallops are also available frozen. Queen scallops are a slightly smaller species and do not have a pink coral.

Scallops with Herbs

Preparing fresh scallops
If you buy scallops attached to the shell, remove the thin black vein running around the body, then loosen the flesh from the shell with a small, sharp knife. Rinse the scallops under cold running water and drain. Scrub the shells thoroughly.

The coral part is very delicate and needs little cooking. Gently remove it and add to the dish for the last 1-2 minutes of microwaving. For even cooking, cut the white flesh in half or quarters.

Microwaving scallops
Scallops have a rich but subtle taste so choose delicate sauces of cream, wine or lemon.

Scallops toughen if cooked too quickly or too long. Microwave at 50% (Medium) unless cooking in a sauce or shielding with other food (as in the scallop kebabs); in such cases they can be cooked at 100% (High). Microwave for the minimum recommended cooking time. Test for doneness after standing time: the flesh should flake easily. If not, microwave 1 minute more.

How to microwave Scallops with herbs

Remove *the scallops from their shells then carefully separate the corals from the white flesh using a small sharp knife. Set corals aside and thoroughly scrub four scallop shells. Slice the whites into halves or quarters.*

Place *onion and butter in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until onion is tender. Add the scallop whites, the chopped parsley and fennel, lemon juice and seasoning and stir well.*

Spoon *mixture into the scallop shells and place shells in a wide circle on a large plate, cover with cling film and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes. Drain excess liquid and divide the corals between the shells.*

Cover *and microwave for a further 4 minutes. Add 10ml / 2tsp cream to each shell, stir gently and microwave, uncovered for 1 minute at 50% (Medium). Stand for 1-2 minutes. Garnish with lemon slices and fennel sprigs before serving, if liked.*

PETER REILLY

Cook's notes

Scallop shells make attractive individual serving dishes and can be used in the microwave. Be sure to clean the shells thoroughly so that no fishy remnants remain.

If scallop shells are not available, individual ramekins or china 'shell' dishes make pretty alternatives. Make sure ramekins have no metal decoration before using in the microwave.

Scallops with herbs

16 mins

Standing time: 1-2 min

12 scallops, with 4 scallop shells
1 small onion, finely chopped
a knob of butter
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp chopped fennel
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
salt and pepper
40ml / 8tsp double cream

SERVES 4

Scallops in the shell

6¼ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Thaw frozen shortcrust at 100% (High) for ½ minute. Stand for 10 minutes before rolling out.

15g / ½oz butter
4 scallop shells
225g / 8oz shortcrust pastry, thawed if frozen (see above)
20ml / 4tsp dry white wine
4 scallops, corals reserved, whites cut in half or quartered
10ml / 2tsp double cream
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
lemon slices, to garnish

SERVES 2 AS A STARTER

1 Melt butter in a small covered dish at 100% (High) for 15 seconds and brush over the insides of two of the scallop shells.
2 Place shells side by side. Roll out pastry to an oblong 2.5cm / 1in

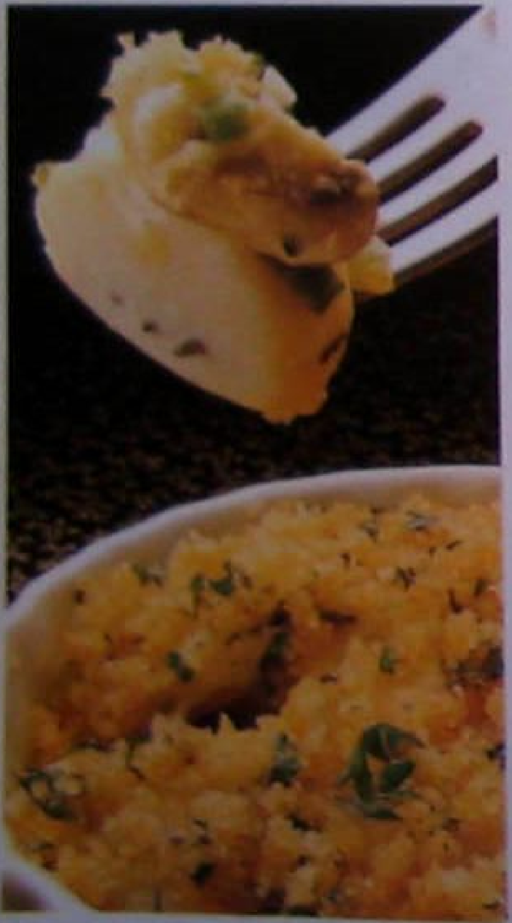
larger all round than the two shells. Cut pastry in half and press firmly into the buttered shells, pressing well down into the flutes.

3 Trim excess pastry from the edges, cover with a piece of absorbent paper and press a second scallop shell, top downwards, into the first shell. Chill for 10 minutes.

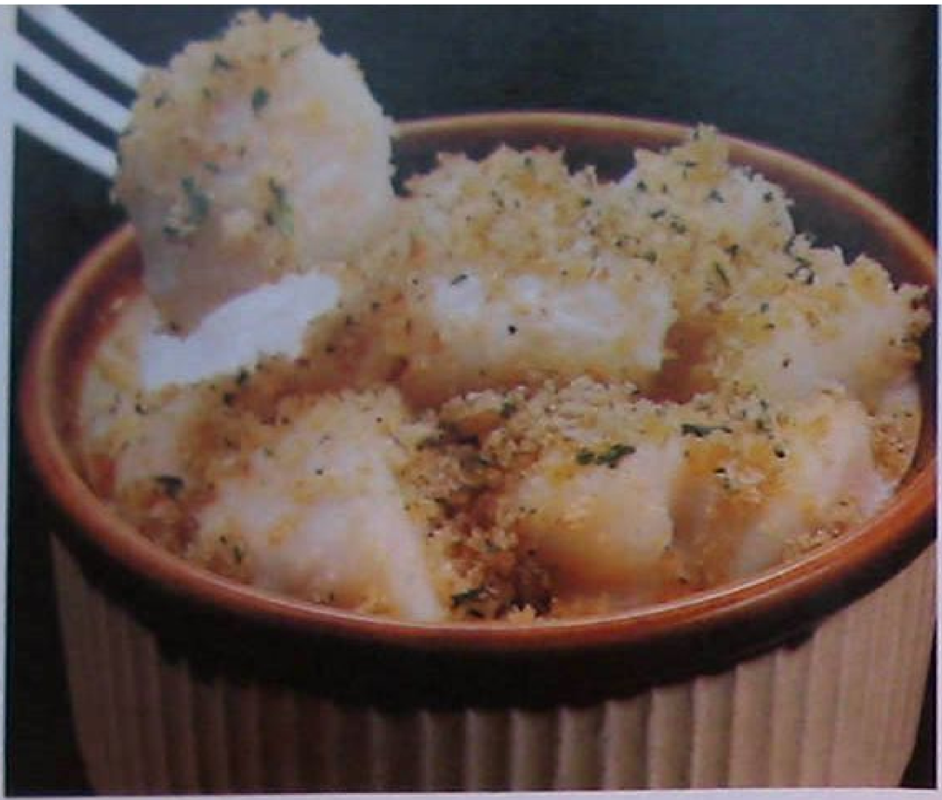
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then carefully remove the top shells and paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for a further minute. Invert the shells on to a rack and cool for 10 minutes.

4 Divide the wine between two scallop shells, add the whites of the scallops and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, turning the whites once. Add the corals and microwave for a further 30 seconds. Add 5ml / 1tsp cream to each shell, but do not stir. Season and microwave for 30 seconds. Stand for 2 minutes.

6 Set on small serving plates, sprinkle with parsley and garnish. Cap with the pastry shells and serve.



Scallops au Gratin



Coquilles St. Jacques

Cook's notes

The pastry shells for this recipe can be made in advance and stored in an airtight container for up to 48 hours. Handle them carefully as they are very fragile.

Coquilles St Jacques

7 mins

Standing time: none

This classic dish makes a superb starter. Cook and serve in the scallop shells instead of ramekins if preferred.

225g / 8oz scallops, corals reserved, whites cut in half or quarters
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
2 spring onions, chopped
50g / 2oz butter, melted
30ml / 2tbls dry white wine
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
20ml / 4tsp plain flour
30ml / 2tbls milk
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese, grated

TOPPING
60ml / 4tbls fresh breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp chopped fresh parsley

SERVES 4

1 Combine the whites of the scallops, mushrooms, onion, half the melted butter, the wine and lemon juice in a bowl. Divide between four ramekins and arrange in a circle on a large plate.

2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes, stirring once. Add corals, stir gently and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes until scallops flake easily.

3 Make the topping: stir breadcrumbs and parsley in the remaining melted butter and set aside.

4 Pour scallop juices into a jug. Whisk in flour, milk and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until thickened, stirring once. Stir in the cheese.

5 Pour over the scallops and stir. Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture over the top. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot.

Microtips

If you have difficulty balancing a scallop shell in the microwave cooker (or even on the serving plate), wedge a piece of lemon under it to keep it level.

Scallops au gratin

9½ mins

Standing time: 1 min

50g / 2oz butter
25g / 1oz plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
12 scallops (about 450g / 1lb in weight), corals reserved, whites halved or quartered
salt and pepper
40g / 1½oz fresh breadcrumbs*
40g / 1½oz chopped parsley
15-30ml / 1-2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Melt half the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in flour, then gradually whisk in milk. Microwave for 2 minutes, whisking after 1 minute and at the end of cooking.

2 Add scallop whites; season. Divide between four dishes or shells.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes, giving dish a quarter turn every minute.

4 Melt remaining butter in a bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in breadcrumbs, parsley and cheese.

5 Add corals to the shells and sprinkle with breadcrumb mixture. Microwave for 2 minutes until cooked. Stand for 1 minute.

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* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ⅔ cup breadcrumbs.

Scallop kebabs

7 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

1 mild onion, quartered lengthways and separated into layers
8 rashers smoked streaky bacon, rinded and cut in quarters
8 large scallops, corals reserved, whites cut in half
8 button mushrooms

TO BASTE
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

CHRIS KNAGGS

Scallops Bonne Femme

1 To assemble the kebabs, thread all the ingredients on eight wooden kebab or saté sticks in the following order: onion, bacon, scallop, bacon, mushroom, onion, bacon, scallop, bacon and onion. Arrange the kebabs in one layer on a large plate.

2 Whisk the basting ingredients together in a small bowl. Brush half the mixture over the kebabs and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.

3 Turn the kebabs over and thread a coral to the end of each. Brush with the remaining mixture and microwave for a further 3 minutes until scallops are tender and flake easily. Allow to stand for 3 minutes. Serve the kebabs on rice, with the cooking juices poured over or served separately.

Scallops bonne femme

24 mins

Standing time: none

This tasty main course has a longer cooking time than normal, since there is a lot more sauce.

25g / 1oz butter
1 large onion, chopped
50g / 2oz plain flour
425ml / ¾pt water
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced
12 scallops (about 450g / 1lb in weight) corals reserved, whites cut in half
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
salt and pepper
1 fish or vegetable stock cube
1 egg yolk
30ml / 2tbls double cream
30ml / 2tbls chopped fresh parsley

SERVES 4

1 Place butter and onion in a large casserole, cover, and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until onion is softened.

2 Sift in flour, then gradually whisk in water. Add the mushrooms and microwave for 4 minutes, stirring once.

3 Add the scallop whites to the sauce with lemon juice and seasoning and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes.

4 Dissolve stock cube in a little of the hot sauce. Return to the casserole. Add the corals and microwave for a further 7 minutes.

5 Mix egg yolk and cream together. Blend in 45ml / 3tbls hot sauce, then stir the mixture back into the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve on a bed of rice, or pour into a serving dish and pipe creamed potato around the edge.

Vegetables from frozen 1

Crisp, colourful and cooked in a matter of minutes — a store of frozen vegetables is always handy. Make them up into delicious medleys with a sauce or serve simply with a pat of butter.

Vegetables take just moments to microwave from frozen. Small quantities can be cooked in their freezer bag (see Microtips, below). Turn large quantities into a dish and microwave according to the chart, opposite. Test for tenderness at the end of the minimum recommended cooking time. Standing times are generally short except for more fibrous vegetables, such as Brussels sprouts and asparagus. Drain after standing and serve.

There is no need to stick to one type of vegetable, or rely on a pack of mixed vegetables for variety, as it is easy to create your own colourful vegetables medleys by microwaving different frozen vegetables together. Just remember that the slower cooking vegetables must be started first. Similarly, you can combine fresh and frozen, or canned and frozen vegetables, depending on what you have to hand.

Finishing touches

Toss the drained vegetables with a pat of butter for a mouthwatering sheen, or sprinkle with finely chopped parsley, season and serve. Alternatively, dress up a dish of vegetables with a smooth sauce which can be quickly microwaved while vegetables stand.

Microtips

Small quantities of frozen vegetables (up to 225g / 8oz) can be cooked in the freezer bag; pierce the bag and place it on absorbent paper in the cooker. Do not cook a large quantity of vegetables in the packet as those on the outside will be overcooked, while the centre vegetables will still be cold.

Sweet 'n' Sour Vegetables

Microwave times for frozen vegetables

VEGETABLE	QUANTITY	MICROWAVE 100% (HIGH)	STANDING TIME	PROCEDURE
Asparagus whole spears	450g / 1lb	9-12 mins	5mins	Place in a dish with 90ml / 6tbls water and cover; give dish half turn once.
Beans broad	225g / 8oz	6-7 mins	3 mins	Place in a dish with 60ml / 4tbls water and cover; stir twice.
	450g / 1lb	10-11 mins	3 mins	As above but use 125ml / 4fl oz water.
French, whole	225g / 8oz	5-7 mins	3 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
	450g / 1lb	10-12 mins	3 mins	As above but use 60ml / 4tbls water.
green, cut	225g / 8oz	6-7 mins	none	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
	450g / 1lb	10-12 mins	none	As above but use 60ml / 4tbls water.
runner, sliced	225g / 8oz	6-7 mins	none	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
	450g / 1lb	10-12 mins	none	As above but use 60ml / 4tbls water.
Broccoli spears	250g / 9oz	6-8 mins	2-3 mins	Place in a dish with 60ml / 4tbls water and cover; stir once.
Brussels sprouts	450g / 1lb	10-12 mins	3-5 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
Carrots baby or small	450g / 1lb	10-12 mins	2-3 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
6mm / ¼in slices	450g / 1lb	8-10 mins	2-3 mins	As above.
Cauliflower florets	225g / 8oz	5-6 mins	2-3 mins	Place in a dish with 60ml / 4tbls water and cover; stir once.
	450g / 1lb	8-9 mins	2-3 mins	As above.
Courgettes 6mm / ¼in slices	450g / 1lb	6-8 mins	2 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
Mixed vegetables	225g / 8oz	4-5 mins	2 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
	450g / 1lb	7-8 mins	2 mins	As above.
Mushrooms whole or sliced	225g / 8oz	4-5 mins	2 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water or knob of butter and cover; stir once.
Onions small, whole	100g / 4oz	2-3 mins	2-3 mins	Place in a dish with 90ml / 6tbls water and cover; stir once.
Peas garden	225g / 8oz	4-6 mins	2-3 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
mange tout	200g / 7oz	3-4 mins	none	As above.
Spinach chopped or leaf	275g / 10oz	7-9 mins	none	Place in a dish (do not add water) and cover. Stir once to break apart.
Sweetcorn whole kernels	454g / 1lb	7-8 mins	2-3 mins	Place in a dish with 30ml / 2tbls water and cover; stir once.
	283g / 10oz	5-6 mins	2-3 mins	As above.

Sweet 'n' sour vegetables

13 mins

Standing time: none

This exotic vegetable dish makes a good accompaniment to ham and pork, as a stir-fried main course. For a sweeter sauce, use pineapple canned in syrup.

200g / 7½oz can pineapple chunks in unsweetened juice, drained with 30ml / 2tbls juice reserved
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls runny honey
7.5ml / 1½tsp cornflour
450g / 1lb frozen whole baby carrots
250g / 8oz frozen mange tout

SERVES 4

1 In a small bowl, combine the reserved pineapple juice, soy sauce, honey and cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until thickened, stirring once halfway through cooking time. Set aside.

2 Place the carrots in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring once.

3 Add the pineapple chunks and mange tout, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Separate the mange tout carefully with a fork, re-cover and microwave for 2 minutes. Drain well.

4 Stir in the pineapple sauce, coating all the vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until heated through.

Creamed Spinach

Creamed spinach

9¼ mins

Standing time: none

275g / 10oz frozen chopped spinach
25g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
pinch of ground nutmeg
100ml / 3½fl oz single cream
salt and pepper

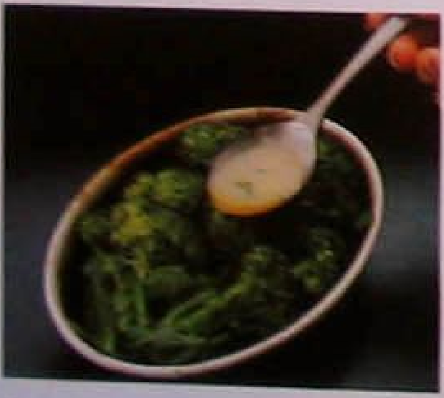
SERVES 4

1 Place the spinach in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes; stir once. Drain and set aside.

2 Melt the butter in a small covered bowl or jug at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the flour, nutmeg, cream and salt and pepper to taste, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until thickened, stirring well after 1 minute. Stir the sauce, pour over spinach and mix well.

Toppings for frozen vegetables

White sauce: *melt 50g / 2oz butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in 30ml / 6tsp cornflour. Blend in 275ml / ½pt milk and season. Microwave 4-5 minutes until thick, stirring regularly.*



Lemon butter sauce: *melt 50g / 2oz butter in a small covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice and 15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley or dill. Especially good with green vegetables.*

Snappy green beans

10 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz packet frozen sliced green beans
1 small onion, finely chopped
4 bacon rashers, cut into 2cm / ¾in pieces
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
large pinch of sugar (optional)
salt and pepper
butter to serve

SERVES 4

1 Pierce the packet of beans. Place on absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Tip the beans into a colander to drain, then set side.

2 Combine the chopped onion and bacon in a casserole. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until the bacon is crisp. Stir well.

3 Stir in the beans, vinegar, sugar, if liked, and salt and pepper to taste. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until the beans are tender but still very crisp, stirring once.

4 Add a knob of butter and serve with egg or poultry dishes.

Above: *Snappy Green Beans*
Below: *Buttered Carrots and Peas*

Buttered carrots and peas

6 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

225g / 8oz frozen sliced carrots
15g / ½oz butter
225g / 8oz frozen peas
pinch of sugar (optional)

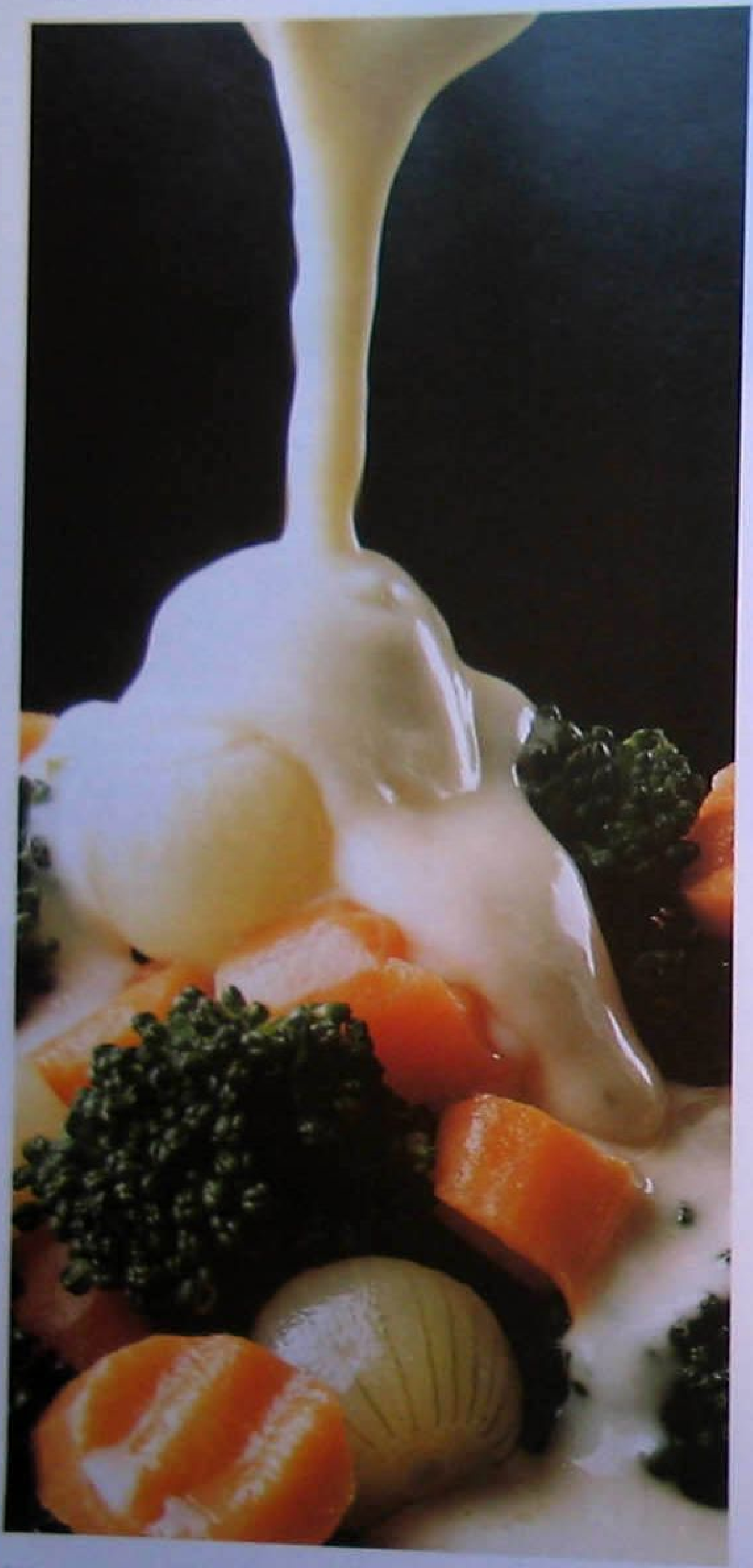
SERVES 4

1 Place the carrots in a casserole. Add the butter, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; stir.

2 Stir in the peas and sugar, if liked. Cover the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Leave to stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes. Drain and serve.

VARIATION

Buttered carrots and corn: substitute 280g / 10oz sweetcorn kernels for peas. Microwave carrots 2 minutes; add corn and microwave for 5-6 minutes.



Saucy vegetable medley

19
mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz frozen whole baby onions
350g / 12oz frozen sliced or crinkle cut carrots
225g / 9oz frozen broccoli

SAUCE
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt milk
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
100g / 4oz Gruyère cheese, grated

SERVES 6

1 Put the onions in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring after half the time. Add the carrots and microwave for a further 2 minutes.

2 Add the broccoli and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-11 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Drain well.

3 Place the butter in a medium-sized bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until melted. Stir in the cornflour. Then gradually blend in the milk. Add salt and pepper to taste and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until thick, stirring every minute.

4 Stir in the cheeses and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-40 seconds, until the cheese begins to melt. Stir well, then pour the sauce over the vegetables.

Cook's notes

If adding cheese to a sauce, cut the cheese into small cubes or grate it before microwaving and stir in evenly to ensure it melts completely during cooking.

If you like to add salt to your vegetables, do so only after cooking to avoid toughening them. Shake or stir the vegetables when removed from the cooker before leaving them to stand.

Broccoli Bake

Cheesy Vegetable Mix

Cheesy vegetable mix

3¼ mins

Standing time: none

To turn this vegetable accompaniment for one into a quick-and-easy meal, top with a poached egg or bacon rashers and serve with a roll.

100g / 4oz frozen mixed vegetables
1 slice processed cheese

SERVES 1

1 Microwave the vegetables in a small, covered bowl at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes; stir once. Drain.

2 Lay the cheese slice on top of the vegetables. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-30 seconds, until cheese melts.

Broccoli bake

21 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Serve this bake with jacket potatoes and grilled tomatoes for a light meatless lunch or supper, or as an accompaniment to chops.

2 × 250g / 9oz packets frozen broccoli
3 eggs, lightly beaten
20ml / 4tsp plain flour
onion salt
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
230g / 8½oz canned water chestnuts, drained and sliced

SERVES 4-6

1 Tip the broccoli into a shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, until just tender, breaking apart once. Drain well, then chop coarsely.

2 Combine the eggs, flour and onion salt to taste in a bowl. Add cheese and water chestnuts. Stir in the chopped broccoli.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, until the cheese melts and the mixture begins to set. Rotate the dish a quarter turn and microwave 2 minutes more.

4 Spoon the mixture into a 20cm / 8in square or 18 × 23cm / 7 × 9in rectangular baking dish, about 5cm / 2in deep. Spread evenly. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, until set, rotating the dish a quarter turn every 4 minutes. Let stand for 2-3 minutes.

Slimmer's notes

Use low-fat cottage and Cheddar cheese for a light main course or slimmer's meal at just 205Cal / 860kJ per portion.

Cakes for a crowd

Throwing a party or catering for a crowd? Baking on a large scale is speedy and simple in the microwave — you can make a delicious slab cake for ten people in less than half an hour.

There are plenty of occasions where big, square-cut cakes are ideal — open days, fêtes, picnics, for instance. Slab cakes, by definition, are made in square or rectangular dishes for easy slicing. Transport your slab cake, ready iced, in the dish and cut it in squares or rectangles.

The recipes are generally based on creaming or on rubbing in, both being classic cake-making methods. The Carrot cake, however, is made using oil. Oil mixtures are particularly suited to microwaving as they stay extra moist.

Cakes cook more evenly if they are rested on an upturned saucer for microwaving. Raising the cakes enables the microwaves to reach all parts of the mixture.

When cooked, a cake feels springy to the touch and looks almost dry on top.

Date Torte

Date torte

17½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz margarine, softened
150g / 5oz soft brown sugar
2 eggs
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
75ml / 5tbls soured cream
15ml / 1tbls milk
100g / 4oz pressed dates, chopped
50g / 2oz hazelnuts, chopped

TOPPING
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls soured cream
150ml / ¼pt whipped cream

SERVES 10

1 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt together. In a separate bowl, cream the margarine with the soft brown sugar.

2 Beat together the eggs, vanilla flavouring, soured cream and milk. Gradually beat the egg mixture into the creamed mixture alternately with the sifted flour, beating until evenly blended. Stir in the dates and nuts.

3 Microwave the mixture and ice the finished cake as shown in the steps below.

Old-fashioned oatmeal cake

19¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Unlike most of the recipes for large cakes, this Old-fashioned Oatmeal Cake is made by melting instead of rubbing in or creaming. This gives a moist, rather heavier-textured result, which contrasts well with the crisp nuts in the topping, and absorbs the syrup.

225g / 8oz plain flour
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
175g / 6oz rolled oats
100g / 4oz lard or cooking margarine
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
60ml / 4tbls golden syrup
1 egg, beaten
150ml / ¼pt milk

CARAMEL TOPPING
50g / 2oz butter
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
15ml / 1tbls milk

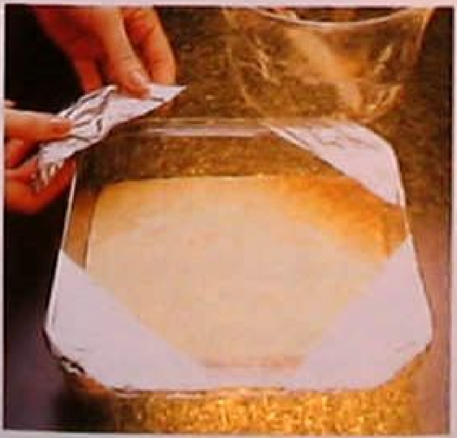
SERVES 10

Old-fashioned Oatmeal Cake

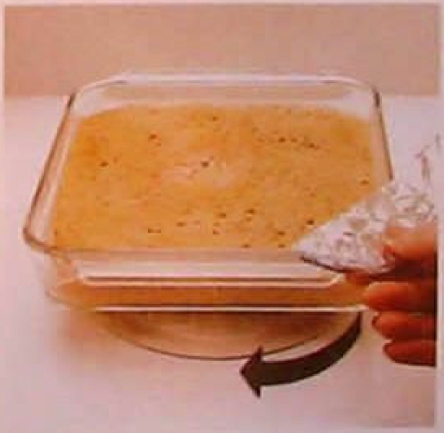
Cook's notes

Most of the cakes here are made in a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish. But you can substitute either for a 20 × 18cm / 8 × 7in rectangular dish.

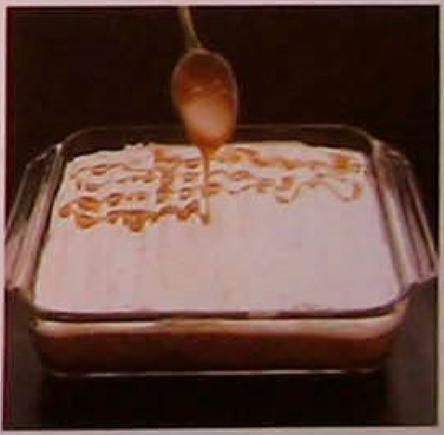
How to microwave Date torte



Spread *the mixture evenly in a greased 20cm / 8in square shallow dish and shield the corners with foil, making sure it is well secured and smooth. Place the dish on an inverted saucer in the cooker.*



Microwave *at 30% (Low) for 15 minutes, turning several times. Remove the foil and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Leave the cake to stand for 5 minutes, then cool in the dish.*



Mix *the brown sugar and soured cream in a small bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30 seconds to melt the sugar. Cover the cake evenly with the cream, then drizzle the topping over it.*

1 Sift the flour, salt, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon and nutmeg into a bowl. Stir in the rolled oats.

2 Place the lard, sugar and syrup in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until melted. Microwave the milk at 100% (High) for 15 seconds.

3 Stir the milk into the melted mixture. Make a well in the dry ingredients and pour in the liquid and egg. Beat together, to form a soft, dropping consistency batter.

4 Spread in a lightly greased 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish. Shield the corners with foil and stand on an upturned saucer.

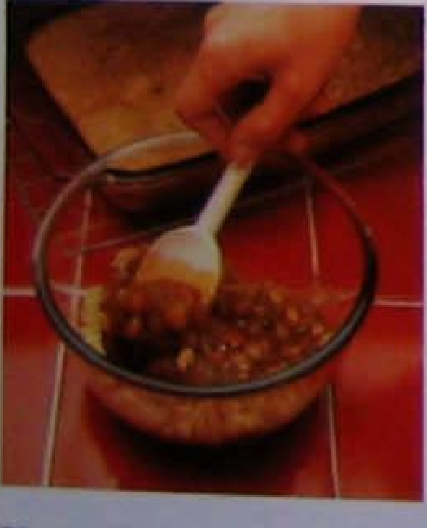
5 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 14 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn several times. Remove foil and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes, then cool on a wire rack. When cold, cover with the topping.

Easy Coffee Crunch Cake

Cook's notes

To measure the golden syrup, dip the measuring spoon into very hot water first — this helps the syrup slide off the spoon easily. Dip the spoon in the hot water between spoonfuls.

How to microwave Caramel topping



Place *the butter, sugar, nuts and milk in a large jug or bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½ minutes, until the butter has melted.*

Stir *the mixture well to dissolve the sugar, then spread the warm mixture evenly over the cooled cake. Allow the topping to set before serving.*

Easy coffee crunch cake

5½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75g / 3oz butter or margarine, softened
60ml / 4tbls light soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz self-raising flour, sifted
1 large egg, beaten
10ml / 2tsp instant coffee powder
10ml / 2tsp milk
100g / 4oz crunchy nut cereal

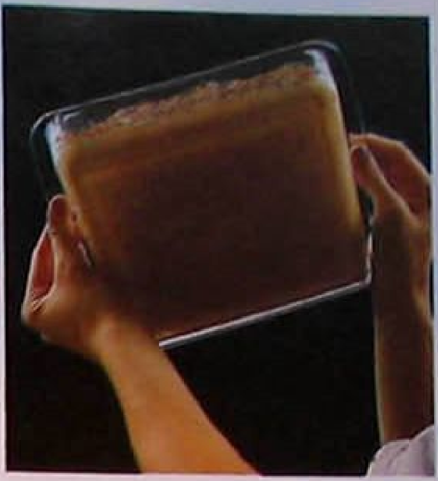
SERVES 6-8

1 Lightly grease a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish.

2 Place 50g / 2oz of the margarine, sugar, flour, egg, coffee powder and milk in a bowl. Beat

How to test slab cakes for doneness

Microwave *according to the recipe, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Test after the shortest stated cooking time by pressing the surface in several places.*



Check *by looking through the base of the dish — only a little uncooked mixture should be visible in the centre, and the top should be almost dry and springy to the touch.*

together to make a smooth mixture — either by using an electric whisk for 1 minute, or beating by hand for 2 minutes.

3 Spoon the mixture into the prepared dish. Shield the corners with small pieces of foil. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every minute. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

4 Place the remaining butter in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds to melt. Stir in the crunchy cereal and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stirring once. Spoon over the hot cake to coat evenly.

5 Allow the cake to get cold, then serve straight from the dish.

Microtips

To refresh a helping of Easy coffee crunch cake, microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, then serve immediately. (Refreshed cake dries out very quickly, so it should be eaten while it is still warm.)

Store leftover crunch cake in cling film in a cool place; if you wish to freeze the cake, remember that it will be slightly drier when defrosted than when it was fresh.

Frosted carrot cake

44¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

275g / 10oz plain flour
10ml / 2tsp bicarbonate of soda
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
10ml / 2tsp ground cinnamon
large pinch of grated nutmeg
450g / 1lb caster sugar
4 large carrots, grated (to give 350g / 12oz)
100g / 4oz walnuts or pecans, finely chopped
225ml / 8fl oz vegetable oil
4 eggs, beaten

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls milk
175g / 6oz cream cheese
350g / 12oz icing sugar, sifted

SERVES 10

1 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, cinnamon and nutmeg into a bowl. Stir in the sugar, carrot and walnuts.

2 Make a well in the centre of the mixture and pour in the oil and eggs. Mix gradually until smooth and blended.

3 Lightly grease two 20cm / 8in square or 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dishes. Divide the mixture evenly between the dishes. Shield the corners of one dish with small pieces of well-secured foil and microwave at 30% (Low) for 20 minutes, turning several times. Remove the foil and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then stand the dish on a wire rack and leave to cool.

Frosted Carrot Cake

4 Repeat with the remaining cake.

5 To make the frosting, combine the butter, milk and cream cheese in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for about 45 seconds until warm. Mix well, then beat in enough of the icing sugar to give a thick but spreadable consistency. Turn the cake out of the dish and sandwich together with some of the frosting. Spread the remaining frosting on top. Chill for about 30 minutes before serving.

Above: *Soured Cream Choc Bar*
Below: *Orange Walnut Bar*

Orange walnut bars

17 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
100g / 4oz margarine, softened
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
grated zest of 1 orange
75g / 3oz walnuts, chopped
2 eggs, beaten
75ml / 3tbls soured cream
15ml / 1tbls milk
Orange frosting (see page 97)

SERVES 10

1 Sift the flour, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda together into bowl. Cream the margarine with the brown and caster sugars and the orange zest.

2 Add remaining ingredients, except the orange frosting, to the mixture. Beat together with an electric whisk for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes.

3 Spoon into a lightly greased 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish. Shield the corners with foil, then stand dish on an upturned saucer.

4 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 15 minutes, giving dish a quarter turn three or four times. Remove the foil and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2 minutes or until the cake is cooked. Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Cool in the dish before frosting.

Soured cream choc bars

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz margarine, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
150g / 5oz plain flour
45ml / 3tbls cocoa powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
1 egg, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
Chocolate frosting (see recipe for Devil's food cake, page 589)

SERVES 10

1 Beat the margarine and sugar together until light and creamy.

2 Sift the flour, cocoa, bicarbonate of soda and salt into a large mixing bowl.

3 Beat the egg, soured cream and vanilla together. Gradually mix the flour and egg mixtures into the creamed margarine and sugar. Beat with an electric whisk for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes.

4 Lightly grease a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish, then spread the mixture evenly in it. Shield the corners with foil and stand on an upturned saucer.

5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, turning every 1-2 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

6 Allow the cake to cool in the dish, then cover with the chocolate frosting.

Custards

Round off a meal with a custard dessert — microwaving makes them all easy, from a hot sauce for a family pudding to an elegant Bavarian custard to grace a dinner party.

The microwave is marvellous for preparing all kinds of custards, and it irons out many of the pitfalls which make conventional custard-making so tricky.

Making good custards has always been a gentle art — both oven-baked and pan-cooked custards need protection (in the form of a water bath or a double saucepan) to ensure slow, even cooking. With a microwave you can be sure of a smooth, lump-free texture every time. There is no need for continuous whisking or stirring, the mixtures do not stick to the dishes they are cooked in, and the risk of curdling through over-heating is reduced.

Perfect custards are simple and quick — there's no more lengthy

Pouring Custard

RAY DUNS

stirring and watching — just careful timing and occasional whisking. All you need to do is follow certain guidelines.

Choose a rounded bowl without corners so that you can whisk or stir thoroughly. Make sure the bowl you use is large enough so that the custard cannot boil over. Use a wire balloon whisk for thorough whisking.

Take care not to overcook egg custards — microwave at 70% (Medium-High) at the highest, so that there is no curdling during cooking. In the case of set custards, overcooking makes the result rubbery and inclined to weep, so stop microwaving when the custard is only just setting. (Remember the custard will continue cooking during standing time.)

Cornflour added to a liquid custard mixture helps to stabilize the eggs and milk and prevents curdling. Always start by mixing a little of the cold liquid with the cornflour until smooth, then the heated liquid can be stirred in without the cornflour forming lumps.

If using more than 275ml / ½pt of milk, speed up the process even more by microwaving it until just hot. Microwave 575ml / 1pt at 100% (High) for about 1 minute, then use according to the recipe.

Cook's notes

Do not allow egg custards to boil as this will scramble the eggs and produce a curdled result.

Similarly, when adding milk to an egg mixture, make sure it is not boiling, as this will also curdle.

Custard tart

16 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see part 14, page 370, and Microtips, page 919)

FILLING

4 eggs, beaten
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
425ml / 15fl oz milk
2-3 drops of vanilla flavouring
grated nutmeg for dusting

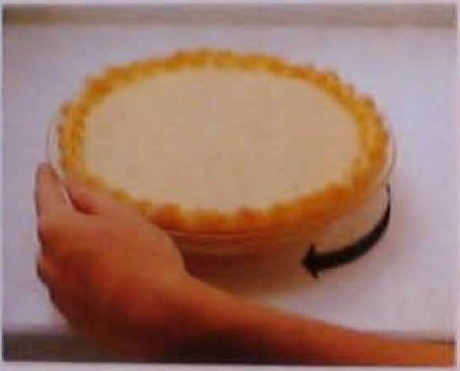
SERVES 6

1 Beat the eggs and sugar in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Blend cornflour with 45ml / 3tbls of milk. Stir into the egg mixture. Microwave according to steps below.

How to microwave Custard tart

Microwave *remaining milk at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Strain egg mixture into milk and add vanilla. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-4½ minutes. Whisk every minute.*

Pour *the custard into the sealed pastry case and sprinkle the top with nutmeg, if liked. Do not overfill — left-over custard can be microwaved separately in custard cups.*



Place *the tart on an upturned saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, until set around the edges, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes.*

Test *by touching the centre of the tart gently; the filling should be almost firm. Do not overcook in the microwave or the custard will be too hard and weep.*

Leave *the tart to stand for 10 minutes, then allow to cool and set. The custard will finish cooking during the standing time and become firmer the more it cools down.*

Serve *cold or, if preferred, warm in the microwave at 50% (Medium); allow 1-1½ minutes for the whole tart and 15-20 seconds for reheating individual wedges.*

Pouring custard

9 mins

Standing time: none

This custard sauce can be made thicker and more stable by the addition of a little cornflour (see Cook's notes, below, for quantities), if preferred.

575ml / 1pt milk
4 egg yolks, beaten
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
1.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES ABOUT 700ml / 1¼pt

1 Pour the milk into a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes until it is hot but not boiling.
2 Mix the egg yolks and sugar in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl until smooth. Gradually blend in the milk.
3 Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring every minute. The custard is cooked when it is thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon.
4 Add the vanilla and strain through a sieve into a serving jug. Serve hot or allow to cool with a piece of cling film resting on the surface. Serve with baked desserts, pastries, fruit and steamed puddings.

Microtips

Make sure the custard does not boil, as it will curdle. The custard is ready when it is the consistency of thin cream; do not cook the mixture any longer as the egg yolks will scramble.

Cook's notes

If an egg custard sauce starts to curdle, pour it straight into a clean, cold bowl and whisk it hard. Custards can be stabilized by the addition of 2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour for every 275ml / ½pt milk used. Mix this with a little cold milk before heating.

Banana Custard Pie

Banana custard pie

6 mins

Standing time: none

54g / 1.9oz packet custard dessert mix*
575ml / 1pt milk
2 bananas
23cm / 9in cooked biscuit crust or pastry case (see part 2, page 32 and part 14, page 370)

SERVES 6

1 Blend the dessert mix with a little of the milk until smooth, then gradually add the rest of the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every minute.
2 Cover the surface of custard with cling film to prevent a skin from forming and leave to cool.
3 Slice the bananas into the prepared case and pour the custard over the top, spreading it evenly. Chill the flan until custard sets.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 50ml / 2½tbls custard powder.

Microtips

If baking a custard in a pastry case, it is necessary to seal the fork holes in the cooked pastry base. Brush the pastry case with a little beaten egg yolk, then microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until the egg has just set in the fork holes on the base.

Baked egg custard

11 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Small custards microwave well — they have a more even texture than large ones and cook in less time.

425ml / 15fl oz milk
3 eggs, beaten
30-45ml / 2-3tbls caster sugar
few drops of vanilla flavouring
grated nutmeg or ground allspice for dusting

SERVES 4-6

Slimmer's notes

To make a nutritious pudding, make the custard using skimmed milk and 30ml / 2tbls sugar. This gives 120 cal / 505kJ per pudding. Serve with fresh fruit.

Baked Egg Custard

Crème patissière

6 mins

Standing time: none

Use this confectioner's custard to fill sponge sandwiches, éclairs, puff pastries and fruit flans.

30ml / 2tbls sugar
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt milk
2 egg yolks, beaten
15g / ½oz butter
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES ABOUT 700ml / 1¼pt

1 Mix the sugar and cornflour and gradually blend in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until thick and smooth.

2 Whisk a little hot mixture into the egg yolks then whisk into the thickened milk. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes. Whisk in the butter and vanilla. Place a piece of cling film over the surface and cool. Chill for 1-2 hours.

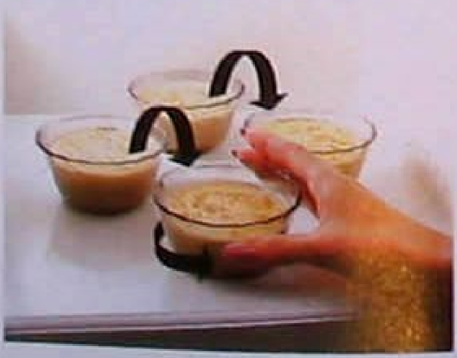
Cook's notes

For a rich vanilla flavour, slit 1-2 vanilla pods along their length and bury them in a jar of caster sugar. Keep tightly covered for a week or so to allow the sugar to absorb the flavour. Use the vanilla sugar in place of the caster sugar called for in the recipe and omit the additional vanilla flavouring.

How to microwave Baked egg custard

Microwave *the milk in a large bowl at 100% (High) for 1 minute until warm. Beat the eggs, sugar and vanilla together.*

Pour *the egg mixture into the milk, mixing well. Strain into four to six ramekins or custard cups and sprinkle the tops with allspice or nutmeg.*



Arrange *in a ring in the cooker. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-14 minutes. Quarter turn three times, rearrange once. Stand 10 minutes.*

Bavarian Custard

DON LAST

Bavarian custard

8 mins

Standing time: none

575ml / 1pt milk
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
4 egg yolks
17.5ml / 3½tsp (1 sachet) powdered gelatine
150ml / ¼pt double cream
nasturtium flowers to decorate (optional)

SERVES 6

1 Microwave the milk in a large jug at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until hot but not boiling.

2 Whisk the sugar, orange zest and egg yolks together in a large bowl until pale, then beat in the hot milk. Microwave the mixture at 70% (Medium-High) for 4 minutes, stirring every minute, until thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon.

3 Mix the gelatine into the orange juice and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes, until dissolved.

4 Stir the orange juice mixture into the hot egg custard and mix thoroughly. Strain through a nylon sieve into a bowl and set aside in a cool place for about 20-30 minutes, until starting to set.

5 Whip the cream until it stands in soft peaks. Fold half into the setting custard mixture, reserving the rest for decoration. Turn the custard into a lightly oiled 575ml / 1pt round tin or mould and chill for about 2-3 hours, until completely set.

6 Turn the custard out on to a serving dish. Pipe the reserved cream in a border around the edge and decorate with nasturtium flowers.

Fork supper for 6

Put on a spread that's sure to impress — an attractive buffet is an easy to way to cater for a crowd, and this menu allows you plenty of time to mingle with your guests.

This menu is ideal for entertaining a small crowd — it gives you plenty of scope to prepare in advance and use the microwave for the final touches and for last-minute quick cooking. After the last dish has been served and when everyone can help themselves you can enjoy the occasion even more.

When preparing the prawns, remove the soft shell, pulling it away with the legs, working from the head to the tail on each side. (See 'Preparing Prawns', page 600, part 22.) Leave the tail on the prawns for easier finger eating.

Put the dip, vegetables and prawns on the table at the same time. After this first course, the only job remaining for the host is to heat the main dish and serve it — then you're free to enjoy the appreciative comments of your friends.

The unusual Savoury Fruit Salad makes a delicious flavour

contrast to the rice dish, while the Broccoli and Mushrooms add a more conventional touch.

To drink, serve a chilled white wine or light punch — the white Glühwein (see page 937) is ideal.

MENU

Spiced Prawns
Jumbo prawns coated in an aromatic sauce

Onion Dip
A creamy dip served with crisp raw vegetables

Chicken with Rice
Bite-sized pieces of chicken in a tasty risotto

Broccoli and Mushrooms
A medley of vegetables with a herby flavour

Savoury Fruit Salad
A refreshing salad with a difference

Coffee Ring Cake
A moist cake with a rich coffee icing

SERVES 6

Spiced prawns

6 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp pepper
pinch of salt
pinch of ground cloves
275ml / ½pt milk
900g / 2lb cooked king-sized prawns, peeled except for tails
sprigs of parsley to garnish

SERVES 6

1 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until bubbling.

2 Blend in the flour, parsley, coriander, cumin, nutmeg, pepper, salt and cloves. Gradually stir in milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, whisking three times, until thick.

3 Place prawns in a dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Coat with sauce.

4 Garnish with parsley and serve with cocktail sticks.

Onion dip

1 min

Standing time: none

Serve a selection of the best fresh vegetables as dunks. Cut carrots, courgettes and celery into finger-length strips; break cauliflower and broccoli into florets.

225g / 8oz cream cheese
30ml / 2tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp onion powder
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt
225ml / 8fl oz soured cream
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1kg / 2¼lb raw vegetables

SERVES 6

1 Place the cream cheese in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, until softened.

2 Beat in the milk, onion powder and garlic salt, blending well.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until warm. Beat well to blend, then stir in the soured cream. Cover and chill.

4 To serve, turn the dip into a bowl, sprinkle with the parsley and surround with the vegetables.

Spiced Prawns

Countdown

The day before
Microwave the Onion Dip and leave, covered, in the refrigerator. Microwave the Chicken with Rice. Cover and store overnight in the refrigerator. Chill the wine.

Early on the day
Microwave the Broccoli and Mushrooms and leave to marinate in the dressing in the refrigerator. (Turn the vegetables occasionally during the day.) Prepare the raw vegetables to serve with the Onion Dip and store in separate polythene bags in the refrigerator. Prepare the fruit for the salad; microwave the dressing and mix into the fruit. Cover and refrigerate. (If using bananas, do not add these to the mixture until just before serving.)

In the afternoon
Microwave the cake and allow to cool. Make the glaze and pour over the cake. Decorate.

Just before the meal
Remove the Broccoli and Mushrooms, Onion Dip and Savoury Fruit Salad from the refrigerator an hour before serving. Arrange the raw vegetables around the dip. Microwave the punch if serving.

Microwave the Spiced Prawns and serve hot with the Onion Dip. During the first course, while the guests are eating the prawns, reheat the Chicken with Rice, by microwaving at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes. Serve with the Broccoli and Mushrooms and the Savoury Fruit Salad buffet.

Savoury fruit salad

4
mins

Standing time: none

Although this salad uses fruits which are conventionally used for dessert, the sharp lemon and ginger salad dressing makes it an interesting and unusual accompaniment to all sorts of light savoury dishes.

175g / 6oz sugar
15ml / 1tsp cornflour
175ml / 6fl oz water
grated zest of 1 large lemon
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
2.5cm / 1in piece fresh ginger root, peeled and grated
1kg / 2½lb mixed apples, pears, apricots, pineapple and bananas, peeled and chopped

SERVES 6

1 Place the sugar and cornflour in a bowl. Gradually add the water, lemon zest, juice and ginger, mixing well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring three times during cooking, until thick and clear.

2 Place the prepared fruit in a serving dish. Pour over the lemon-ginger syrup and mix well to coat all the fruit. Keep the salad, closely covered, in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Broccoli and mushrooms

2
mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb broccoli, cut into florets
45ml / 3tbls water
450g / 1lb button mushrooms
225ml / 8fl oz bottled Italian dressing

SERVES 6

1 Place the broccoli in a bowl and pour over the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Drain and rinse in cold water to stop the broccoli from cooking any further.

2 Mix the broccoli and mushrooms in a bowl. Pour the dressing over and toss to coat. Cover and chill for at least 8 hours, stirring occasionally to keep the pieces coated in the marinade.

3 To serve, transfer the vegetables from the dressing with a slotted spoon to a serving dish, draining off excess liquid.

Broccoli and Mushrooms

Chicken with rice

48
mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.6kg / 3½lb boneless chicken breasts, skinned
90ml / 6tbls white wine
450g / 1lb long-grain rice
4 spring onions, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls instant rich gravy granules or powder
2.5ml / ½tsp pepper
100g / 4oz salted roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped

SERVES 6

1 Place the chicken breasts in a single layer in a large shallow dish. Pour over the wine, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-18 minutes, rearranging twice, until just cooked.

2 Remove the chicken with a slotted spoon and chop into bite-sized pieces.

3 Drain the cooking juices into a measuring jug and make up to 1.1L / 2pt with hot water.

4 Place the rice, cooking liquid, spring onions, gravy granules and pepper in a large bowl, mixing well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes.

5 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 25-30 minutes, or until the rice is tender and all the liquid has been absorbed.

6 Stir in the chicken and peanuts, mixing well. Cover and leave to stand for 10 minutes to complete cooking. Serve hot.

VARIATION

Turkey with rice: this is ideal for using up any left-over cooked turkey. Remove the meat from the bones and cut into bite-sized pieces. Use in place of the chicken breast. The dish can be frozen for up to three months; defrost by microwaving at 100% (High) for 13-17 minutes, breaking up and stirring twice.

Cook's notes

If you want to prepare this dish in advance, allow it to cool, then cover and refrigerate. Remove from the refrigerator 1 hour before serving time. To serve, reheat at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes.

Coffee ring cake

13 mins

Standing time: none

1½ digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
225g / 8oz plain flour, sifted
275g / 10oz caster sugar
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
4 eggs
150g / 5oz margarine, softened
135ml / 4½fl oz milk
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

DECORATE
Coffee glaze (see recipe right)
silver and gold dragees

SERVES 6

1 Grease a 2L / 3½pt ring mould. Coat the mould thoroughly with the biscuit crumbs.

2 Place the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, eggs, margarine, milk and vanilla flavouring in a bowl. Beat with an electric whisk for 1 minute, or with a wooden spoon for 2 minutes, until smooth and creamy.

3 Spread the mixture evenly in the dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes.

4 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 5-8 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn two or three times, until the cake is cooked. Test by pushing a cocktail stick into the centre — it should come out clean.

Coffee Ring Cake

5 Leave to stand in the dish for 5-10 minutes, then turn out on to a serving plate. Drizzle the glaze over the top and decorate with the silver and gold dragees.

Coffee glaze

200g / 7oz icing sugar
15ml / 1tbls strong coffee flavouring
45-60ml / 3-4tbls water

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 RING CAKE

1 Sift the icing sugar into a large bowl. Mix all the ingredients together gradually, to give a thick pouring consistency.

Brussels sprouts

The microwave is marvellous for Brussels sprouts, keeping them crisp and green. Serve them coated in a creamy sauce, sprinkled with lemon zest or a crisp topping for the perfect vegetable accompaniment.

Brussels sprouts cooked in the microwave retain their brilliant green colour, crisp texture and 'nutty' flavour. Since very little water is needed (see chart for details) they retain most of their healthy vitamins. This means cleaner cooking and there is an extra bonus — cooking odours are reduced to a minimum.

When buying Brussels sprouts, look for firm vegetables with tight green leaves. Avoid puffy or soft sprouts with loose leaves, and any with wilted, yellow leaves — they are definitely past their best.

Store sprouts in a sealed container or bag in the crisper compartment of the refrigerator for no longer than four days. Do not wash or trim the vegetables until ready to use.

Brussels Sprouts in Ginger Wine

How to microwave Brussels sprouts

To prepare *fresh Brussels sprouts, remove outer leaves, trim stems level and cut a small cross in the base to speed cooking. Place in a casserole.*

Add *water, cover and microwave as directed in the chart, stirring once. Cover and stand for 3-5 minutes, then drain. Season and serve.*

Cook's notes

A good way to make the most of leftover sprouts is to heat them up with breadcrumbs: melt 50g / 2oz butter at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, add 75ml / 5tbls toasted breadcrumbs, season and toss well. Add 450g / 1lb sprouts and microwave for a further 2½-3½ minutes, stirring once. For 225g / 8oz sprouts, halve the ingredients and microwave for half the time, or until the sprouts are heated through.

Brussels sprouts in ginger wine

6¾ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Cooking sprouts in green ginger wine gives them a delicate hint of ginger, lifting them out of the ordinary.

450g / 1lb Brussels sprouts
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
60ml / 4tbls green ginger wine
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Microwave the Brussels sprouts as directed in the chart, right. Leave to stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, blend the cornflour smoothly with a little of the ginger wine in a small bowl. Gradually stir in the remaining wine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, stirring once until thickened to a good consistency.

3 Drain the sprouts. Pour the sauce over the sprouts, season to taste with salt and pepper and serve with a plain roast or meat pie such as steak and kidney pudding.

Cook's notes

The quantity of sauce is just enough to coat the sprouts. If you like more sauce, double the quantities of sauce ingredients and microwave it for 1½-2 minutes until thickened to desired consistency.

Microwave times for Brussels sprouts

TYPE	AMOUNT	WATER	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Fresh	450g / 1lb 900g / 2lb	60ml / 4tbls 120ml / 8tbls	6-7 mins 12-14 mins
Frozen	450g / 1lb 900g / 2lb	30ml / 2tbls 60ml / 4tbls	10-11 mins 20-22 mins

Lemony Brussels sprouts

6 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

450g / 1lb Brussels sprouts
60ml / 4tbls water
squeeze of lemon juice
pinch of finely grated lemon zest
pinch of grated nutmeg
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine the Brussels sprouts, water, lemon juice and zest and nutmeg in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring once. Stand, covered, 3-5 minutes.

2 Drain and season. Serve topped with a knob of butter, if liked.

VARIATION

Brussels sprouts purée: for a really tasty and unusual vegetable accompaniment, microwave the sprouts as above, omitting the lemon juice and zest. Drain and mash or purée with 30ml / 2tbls single cream.

Crunchy-topped Brussels sprouts

15 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

700g / 1½lb Brussels sprouts
90ml / 6tbls water
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt single cream
150ml / ¼pt hot chicken stock

TOPPING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
150ml / ¼pt water
100g / 4oz parsley, lemon and thyme stuffing mix
large pinch of turmeric
50g / 2oz chopped walnuts

SERVES 6

1 For the topping, put the butter and water into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until boiling. Stir in the stuffing mix and turmeric.

2 Put the Brussels sprouts into a 1.7L / 3pt casserole with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, stirring once. Stand, covered, 3-5 minutes.

Crunchy-topped Brussels Sprouts

3 Meanwhile, mix the flour to a paste with a little cream. Stir in the remaining cream, then the stock.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring every minute until thickened.

5 Drain the sprouts and pour over the cream sauce. Sprinkle the top with the stuffing mix and walnuts. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes to heat.

Cook's notes

Plainly-cooked Brussels sprouts make a simply delicious accompaniment to all sorts of dishes including roasts, chops and omelettes. For variety, toss the sprouts in a swiftly microwaved sauce, sprinkle them with a crunchy breadcrumb topping, or enhance their flavour with a pinch of nutmeg or grated lemon zest.

Saucy Brussels sprouts

7¾ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Serve these sprouts with poultry or game dishes.

450g / 1lb Brussels sprouts

SAUCE
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

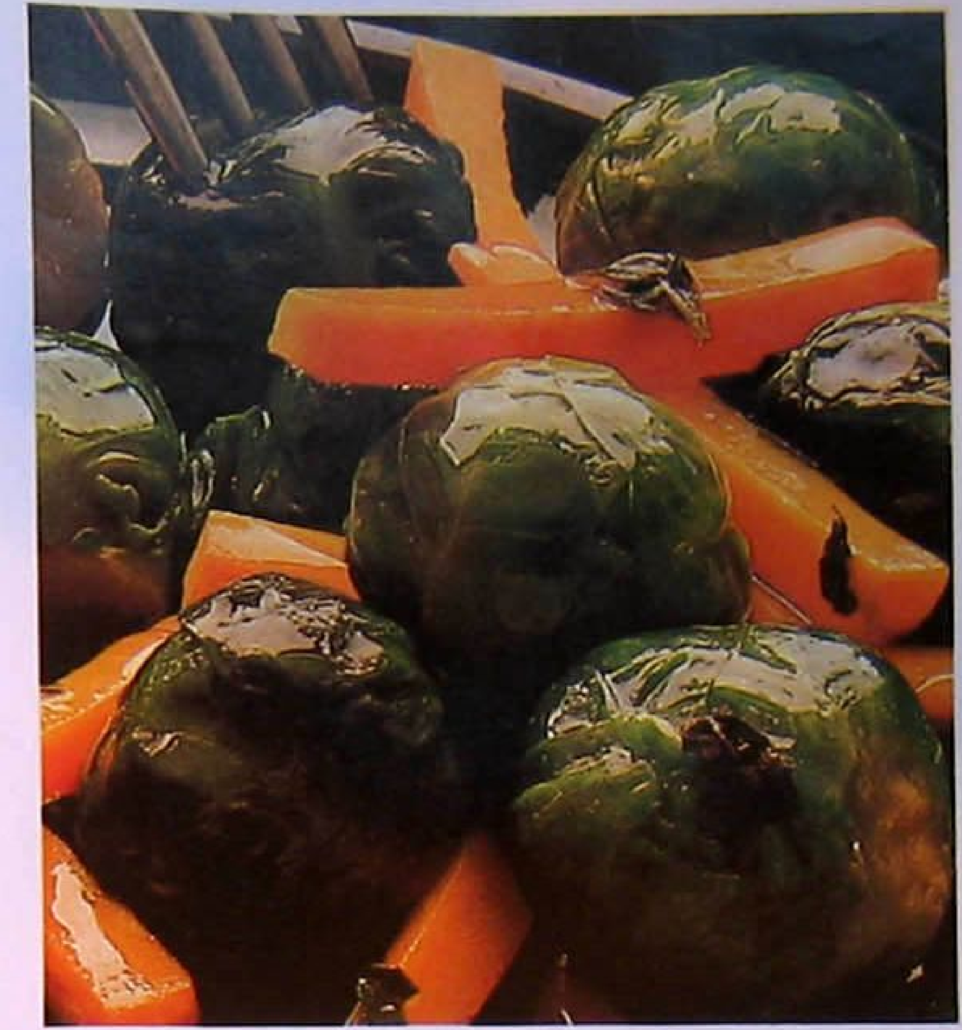
1 Cook the Brussels sprouts as directed in the chart, page 927. Let stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, put the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted. Stir in the flour, gradually blend in the milk, season to taste.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, whisking twice, until thickened.

4 Drain the sprouts, pour over the sauce and serve.

Saucy Brussels Sprouts



Minted Carrots and Sprouts

Minted carrots and sprouts

16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb frozen Brussels sprouts
450g / 1lb carrots, cut into 5cm / 2in strips
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz butter
15ml / 1tbls water or white wine
5ml / 1tsp chopped mint or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried

SERVES 8

1 Put the sprouts, carrots and water into a 3.4L / 6pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, or until the carrots are tender and the sprouts heated, stirring twice to break the sprouts apart. Cover and leave to stand for 5 minutes, then drain.

2 Place the butter, water or wine and mint in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until melted and bubbling.

3 Pour over the vegetables and toss to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes or until heated through.

VARIATION

Minted carrots and sprouts for four: halve the quantity of sprouts and carrots and microwave for 7-9 minutes, stirring once. Then continue as directed above.

Microtips

Microwaving time depends upon the size of the sprouts. All the recipes here use small to medium-sized Brussels sprouts, so allow a little extra time if using large ones.

Microwaving poussins

Poussins are the perfect choice for a dinner party. They look attractive, taste superb and can be microwaved quickly and easily. Simply roast or braise them for a delicious feast.

Poussins are small tender chickens. They are available fresh or frozen. Tasty, succulent and elegant, they are a popular choice when entertaining and for romantic dinners or anniversaries.

An average-sized poussin weighs between 400-700g / 1-1½lb, so it is customary to serve one poussin per person. This looks impressive — and there's no troublesome carving either!

Poussins have a neat, rounded shape which makes them particularly suitable for microwaving. They can be braised in a baking dish, or roasted on a rack and cook quickly, without losing any of their succulence (see steps page 931 and page 933). The recipes here offer a selection of glazes and you can also ring the changes with different stuffings. The body cavity of a poussin is relatively large, so it can hold a satisfying quantity of filling. Whether braising or roasting, microwave poussins at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Serve poussins with potatoes and a choice of vegetables.

Braised poussins with fruit

36 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

4 oven-ready poussins

STUFFING

75g / 3oz rice, cooked conventionally
100g / 4oz seedless green grapes
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
150g / 5oz canned mandarin orange segments, drained with juice reserved
salt and pepper

Braised Poussins with Fruit

30ml / 2tbls clear honey
parsley, green grapes and mandarin orange segments, to garnish

SERVES 4

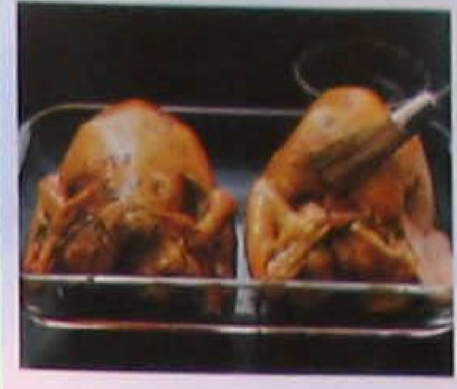
1 Rinse the poussins and pat dry with absorbent paper.

2 Combine the cooked rice, grapes, parsley and oranges for the stuffing. Season and use to stuff the body cavity of each poussin. Place the birds, breast side down, in a baking dish.

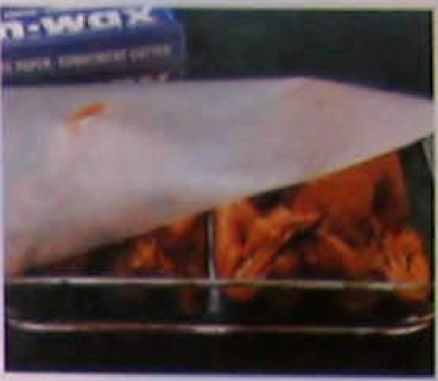
3 Place 30ml / 2tbls of the reserved orange juice with the honey in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until hot. Use half the mixture to glaze the poussins.

4 Microwave the poussins (see steps 2-5 opposite) at 100% (High) for 35-40 minutes turning and basting with remaining glaze halfway through cooking. Stand, covered, for 10 minutes: garnish.

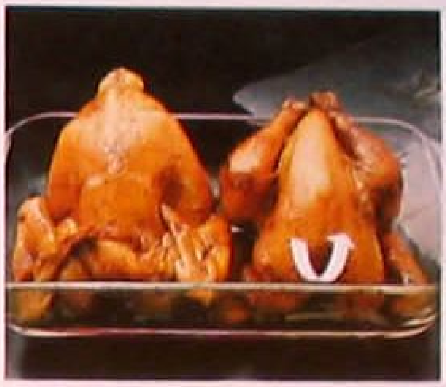
How to microwave Braised poussins



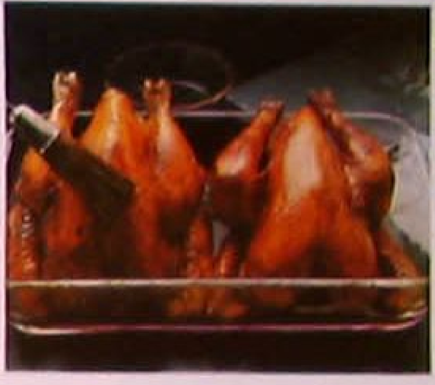
Stuff *poussins with chosen stuffing if required. Then place birds, breast side down, in a baking dish. Prepare glaze and brush half over birds. Calculate cooking time (see chart page 932).*



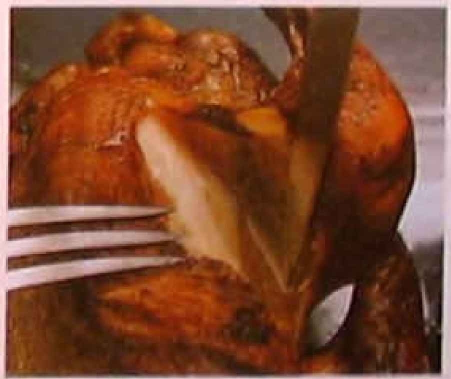
Cover *poussins loosely with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for one quarter of the calculated cooking time, then rotate dish a half turn.*



Microwave *for a further quarter of the cooking time. Turn the poussins breast side up, with the sides of the birds that were to the edge of the dish, now in the centre. They will be very hot, so use a long fork or wear rubber gloves to do this.*



Brush *birds with the remaining glaze. Re-cover with greaseproof paper and microwave for another quarter of the calculated cooking time. Rotate dish half a turn. Continue microwaving at 100% (High) for remaining quarter of the cooking time.*



Test *that the poussins are cooked: the legs should move freely and the juices from the inner thigh should run clear if pierced with a sharp knife. If still pink, microwave for 3-5 minutes.*

Cover *the dish tightly with fresh greaseproof paper and leave the poussins to stand for 10 minutes in order to complete cooking. Garnish and serve one poussin per person.*

Braised poussins with pineapple

23¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

2 oven-ready poussins

STUFFING

1 small onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
50g / 2oz fresh white or brown breadcrumbs
100g / 4oz drained canned pineapple, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp dried tarragon or mixed herbs
salt and pepper

GLAZE

15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
knob of butter

SERVES 2

1 Rinse the poussins and pat dry with absorbent paper.

2 Place onion and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until onion is soft. Stir in the breadcrumbs, pineapple, herbs and seasoning. Stuff the body cavity of each poussin loosely with the mixture. Arrange the birds, breast side down, in a baking dish.

3 Place the Worcestershire sauce and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave for 15-30 seconds until the butter has melted. Brush half this glaze over the poussins.

4 Microwave the poussins (see steps 2-4, page 931) at 100% (High) for 20-22 minutes turning and basting with remaining glaze halfway through cooking. Stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Serve.

Poussins with pineapple stuffing for four: double the quantities of all the ingredients and microwave at 100% (High) for 35-40 minutes, or until cooked.

Microwave cooking times for Poussins*

NUMBER	TIME AT 100% (HIGH) (9-10 mins 450g / 1lb)	STANDING TIME	PROCEDURE
1	9-10 mins	5 mins	rearrange halfway through cooking
2	20-22 mins	5 mins	as above
4	35-40 mins	5 mins	rearrange every 10 minutes

*Timings are based on poussins weighing about 450g / 1lb each. Microwaving times are the same for stuffed and unstuffed birds.

Roast poussins with redcurrants

22¾ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

2 oven-ready poussins

STUFFING
150g / 5oz redcurrant jelly
grated zest and juice of 1 small orange
40g / 1½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls water
50g / 2oz breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls raisins
45ml / 3tbls chopped walnuts
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
salt and pepper

GLAZE
15ml / 3tsp Worcestershire sauce
knob of butter

SERVES 2

VARIATIONS

Cranberry stuffing: substitute cranberry sauce or relish for the redcurrant jelly.

Mushroom and almond stuffing: omit the raisins, walnuts and cinnamon and add 75g / 3oz slivered blanched almonds, 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice, and 100g / 4oz sliced mushrooms fried in butter.

To microwave Roast poussins with redcurrants

Combine *the redcurrant jelly, orange zest and juice in a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until melted.*

Reserve *three-quarters of the redcurrant mixture. Add the rest of the stuffing ingredients to remaining redcurrant mixture. Stuff the poussins and place them on a roasting rack, breast side down.*

Combine *Worcestershire sauce and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds, or until butter melts. Brush poussins with half the glaze. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 20-22 minutes, or until cooked; rearranging, turning birds over and reglazing once. Stand for 10 minutes. Reheat the remaining redcurrant sauce at 100% (High) for 1 minute.*

Roast Poussins with Redcurrants

Braised poussins with celery

36 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

4 oven-ready poussins
celery leaves, to garnish

STUFFING
75g / 3oz rice, cooked conventionally
2 celery stalks, chopped
3 slices bacon, rinds removed and chopped
salt and pepper

GLAZE
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls white wine
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
5ml / 1tsp cornflour

SERVES 4

1 Rinse the poussins and pat dry with absorbent paper.

2 Mix the rice, celery and bacon. Season with salt and pepper and use to stuff the body cavity of the poussins loosely. Arrange the birds, breast side down, in a baking dish.

3 Place the glaze ingredients in a small bowl and blend thoroughly and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, until hot.

4 Brush the poussins with half the glaze, then microwave (see steps 2-5, page 931) at 100% (High) for 35-40 minutes, or until cooked and juices run clear. Stand, covered, for 10 minutes.

5 Garnish with celery leaves and serve.

Microtips

Because of their relatively low fat content, poussins should be brushed with a browning agent or glaze to give the skin of the birds an appetizing colour.

Worcestershire sauce glaze (see recipe for Poussins with pineapple stuffing) gives a rich colour with a flavour that marries well with any of the stuffings here.

Braised Poussins with Celery

Poussins with (from left) Crabmeat Stuffing, Cherry Stuffing and Sauce and Vegetable Stuffing

Crabmeat stuffing

75g / 3oz crabmeat, drained if fresh, thawed if frozen
½ small green pepper, seeded and chopped
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
1 slice white bread, cut into cubes
pepper to taste

FOR 2 POUSSINS

1 Combine all the ingredients and mix thoroughly. Use to stuff poussins.

Microtips

Microwaving time remains the same whether the bird is stuffed or not, so the recipes can be adapted for a greater or smaller number of poussins. Simply double or halve the ingredients as required and refer to the chart (page 932) for cooking times, or allow approximately 9-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb.

Cherry stuffing and sauce

3
mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
½ onion, finely chopped
75g / 3oz fresh breadcrumbs
50g / 2oz drained canned cherries, stoned and chopped
grated zest and juice of ½ orange
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SAUCE
75g / 3oz cherry jam
ground nutmeg to taste

FOR 2 POUSSINS

1 Place butter and onion in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the onion is soft. Add the breadcrumbs, cherries, orange juice and zest and parsley, mixing thoroughly. Cool completely, then use to stuff the poussins.

2 Prepare the sauce while the poussins are standing. Combine the jam and nutmeg in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot. Brush the hot sauce over the cooked poussins, or serve separately.

Vegetable stuffing

3
mins

Standing time: none

1 carrot, thinly sliced
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
1 small onion, finely chopped
23ml / 1½tbls rice, cooked conventionally
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
2.5ml / ½tsp dried sage
salt and pepper

FOR 2 POUSSINS

1 Combine the vegetables, rice and herbs in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Season and mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, until vegetables begin to soften. Allow the stuffing to cool completely, before using.

Hot alcoholic drinks

Welcome your friends with hot drinks, generously spiked with a spirit or liqueur. Speedily made in the microwave, they get any gathering off to a good start and warm the cockles of your heart on a chilly evening.

Making hot alcoholic drinks in the microwave is speedy and fuss-free: all the ingredients can be mixed and heated in the serving bowl or jug from which you wish to serve.

Always use a sufficiently large container to prevent the danger of the drink boiling over and remember to check china jugs for any gold or silver trims or printing. Choose heatproof glass jugs and bowls and do not use crystal glass as this contains lead. With a bowl, a ladle is essential for serving.

For a party, add a little sliced fresh fruit and a few whole spices to the serving bowl or jug for an attractive garnish. The punch and mulled drink recipes here can be varied — you can change the type and quantity of the alcohol or soft mixer to suit the occasion and your taste.

Cook's notes

Spirits, such as brandy, whisky, rum and vodka, can be warmed in the microwave when mixed with other ingredients.

However, heating spirit by itself is not recommended. This is because spirits, with their high alcohol content, are extremely volatile and can catch fire very quickly.

Glühwein

Glühwein

7 mins

Standing time: none

This hot spiced wine is traditionally drunk in the snowy Alps.

1 small lemon, cut into eight wedges
8 cloves
70cl bottle red wine
50g / 2oz sugar
1 cinnamon stick
1 orange, sliced into rings
large pinch of ground allspice
50ml / 2fl oz brandy

SERVES 6

1 Stud the lemon with the cloves and place in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Add all the remaining ingredients except the brandy.
2 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until the mixture is almost boiling.
3 Stir in the brandy. Ladle into heatproof glasses to serve.

VARIATION
To make white Glühwein, use medium dry white wine and substitute 50ml / 2fl oz Cointreau for the brandy. Omit the allspice and grate a little nutmeg over each glass.

Citrus warmer

6 mins

Standing time: none

450ml / 16fl oz unsweetened orange juice
225ml / 8fl oz red grape juice
225ml / 8fl oz unsweetened pineapple juice
juice of ½-1 lemon
125ml / 4fl oz light rum or vodka
fresh mint to garnish

SERVES 6

1 Combine all the ingredients except the rum or vodka in a 1.7L / 3pt jug or bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes.
2 Stir in the rum or vodka and serve, garnished with mint sprigs.

Atholl brose

4 mins

Standing time: none

This is a traditional Scottish nightcap. Serve in mugs.

575ml / 1pt milk
50ml / 2fl oz clear honey
150ml / 5fl oz Scotch whisky

SERVES 3-4

1 Mix the milk and honey in a 1L / 1¾pt jug or bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, until almost boiling.
2 Stir in the whisky, ladle into mugs and serve.

VARIATION
Stir 30ml / 2tbls porridge oats into the milk, and stir two or three times during cooking for a much thicker more substantial toddy.

Hot mulled cider

6 mins

Standing time: none

1L / 1¾pt still cider
4 cloves
1 large cinnamon stick
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground allspice
2.5ml / ½tsp ground nutmeg
125ml / 4fl oz orchard fruit drink or apple juice
30ml / 2tbls light brown sugar

SERVES 6

1 Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, until almost boiling.
2 Strain into heatproof serving glasses. Add a cinnamon stick to each glass and serve.

Cook's notes

If you have no still cider in the house, you can use sparkling cider instead of the still variety. It tends to foam slightly when heated, but the drink tastes just as good.

Left to right: *Suny Tea, Fruity Wine Punch, Jamaican Hot Chocolate, Hot Beef Broth*

Sunny tea

4
mins

Standing time: none

60ml / 4tbls instant lemon-flavoured tea powder*
850ml / 1½pt hot water
275ml / ½pt orchard fruit drink or apple juice
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground nutmeg
125ml / 4fl oz dark rum
lemon slices, to garnish

SERVES 6

1 In a 1.7L / 3pt jug or bowl, combine all the ingredients except the rum and lemon slices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.

2 Stir in the rum, cover with cling film and microwave for 1-2 minutes, until very hot but not boiling. Serve in heatproof glass mugs, garnished with lemon slices or serve chilled with mint leaves.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
If instant lemon-flavoured tea powder is not available, make up 850ml/1½pt medium-strength lemon tea. Strain and sweeten to taste.

Fruity wine punch

6
mins

Standing time: none

1L / 1¾pt grape and blackcurrant juice or red grape juice
50ml / 2fl oz fresh orange juice
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
6 whole cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
pinch of ground allspice
225ml / 8fl oz red wine
cinnamon sticks, to garnish

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine ingredients except wine and cinnamon in a 1.7L / 3pt jug or bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until very hot.

2 Add the wine, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Serve in heatproof glasses, garnished with cinnamon sticks.

VARIATION
For a richer, more luxurious punch, substitute port for the wine and reduce the quantity of sugar to taste.

Jamaican hot chocolate

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

The combination of chocolate and coffee is traditional. Here they are blended together in a velvety drink.

850ml / 1½pt water
20ml / 4tsp cocoa powder
125ml / 4fl oz coffee liqueur
150ml / ¼pt thick cream
2 egg whites, lightly whisked
whipped cream, to serve
1 chocolate flake bar

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the water in a jug at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, until almost boiling.
2 Put the cocoa into a 1.1L / 2pt jug or bowl and blend in 45ml / 3tbls of the hot water. Slowly stir in the rest of the water, then the liqueur and cream.
3 Whisk the egg whites until soft peaks form; fold into the chocolate cream mixture. Microwave uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 15-30 seconds until heated through. Serve in heatproof glasses, topped with whipped cream and sprinkled with crumbled chocolate flake.

Hot beef broth

3 mins

Standing time: none

A spiced, meaty drink for an instant 'pick-me-up'

296g / 10½oz can condensed beef consommé
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
pinch of cayenne pepper
125ml / 4fl oz dry sherry
2 spring onions, to garnish

SERVES 2

1 Combine the consommé, Worcestershire sauce and cayenne in a 575ml / 1pt jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
2 Stir in the sherry, cover and microwave for 1-1½ minutes.
3 Serve in heatproof mugs, with a spring onion garnish.

Microtips

When heating a drink containing wine or a liqueur, cover the bowl or jug with vented cling film. This prevents excess evaporation and avoids any splattering.

Easy omelettes

Get cracking with eggs — with the help of your microwave and the simplest of ingredients you can make omelettes that are plain or puffy, savoury or sweet — perfect for easy, informal eating.

Microwaved omelettes are quick to make and easy too, provided you follow the instructions and timings given in the recipes. Bear in mind that because a microwaved omelette is cooked in a glass dish and not a conventional frying pan it does not brown in the usual way.

You can microwave all sorts of tasty omelettes — savoury for a main course, or sweet for a dessert — in a matter of minutes. The traditional French omelette is quite flat and either folded over, or rolled up with a filling. Puffy omelettes are made by folding the beaten egg yolks into the whisked egg whites. During microwaving the mixture separates to give a smooth eggy base under a light, fluffy top layer. A puffy omelette is cut in half to serve.

The Italian Frittata is quite different. The eggs are cooked together with the filling and this gives a thick, substantial result. Cut it in half, or into wedges and serve straight from the dish. Whichever type of omelette you make, rotate the dish a quarter turn, three times during cooking, to ensure even cooking. This is particularly important when making any of the puffy omelettes given here as it helps produce an even rise.

Puffy Savoury Omelette

Types of omelette

Puffy Omelette: *lightly fold the egg yolk mixture into the stiffly whisked egg whites. Microwave as directed in the recipes for Puffy Savoury or Puffy Fruit Omelette (right, and page 942).*

French Jam Omelette: *pour the lightly beaten eggs into the melted butter in pie dish and cook, following instructions given in recipe (right). Add the filling and fold in half.*

Italian Frittata: *microwave the vegetables in the oil until tender-crisp, then mix in the lightly beaten eggs. Cook following instructions given in the recipe (right).*

Puffy savoury omelette

8¼ mins

Standing time: none

4 eggs, separated
30ml / 2tbls milk
salt and pepper
large knob of butter

FILLING
4 rashers streaky bacon, chopped
1 large tomato, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 2

1 Prepare the filling: put the bacon, tomato and all but 15ml / 1tbls green pepper in a bowl. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Set aside, covered.

2 In a small bowl, mix the egg yolks, milk and seasoning together. Put the butter in a shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Swirl the butter over the base and sides of dish to prevent omelette sticking.

3 Whisk the egg whites in a large grease-free bowl until stiff. Stir 15ml / 1tbls of whisked egg white into the yolks to lighten the consistency. Lightly fold the egg yolk mixture into the egg whites. Gently pour the mixture into the dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes until the mixture is partially set. Rotate the dish a quarter turn three times during cooking.

4 Spoon the cooked filling over half the omelette and sprinkle with half the cheese. Loosen omelette with a spatula and fold in half. Top with the remaining grated cheese and green pepper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes until the cheese melts and centre of omelette is set. Cut in half and serve at once.

VARIATIONS
Replace the chopped green pepper with red pepper, or 4 sliced spring onions, if preferred.

Italian frittata

6 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 1tbls olive oil
1 potato, cooked and chopped
1 courgette, cut into thin slices
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
salt and pepper
3 eggs, lightly beaten

SERVES 2-3

1 Put the oil, potato, courgette and green pepper in a shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish. Cook at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until the vegetables are tender-crisp.

2 Season the lightly beaten eggs, then pour over mixture in dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes until cooked through. Rotate dish a quarter turn three times during cooking. Cut in half, or into three wedges, and serve.

French jam omelette

3½ mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls raspberry jam
large knob of butter
3 eggs, lightly beaten
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar, sifted

SERVES 2

1 Put the jam in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-25 seconds until heated through.

2 Put butter in a shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish, cover and cook at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Swirl butter over base and sides of dish.

3 Pour in the lightly beaten eggs and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes until cooked through. Rotate dish a quarter turn three times during cooking.

4 Spoon the warmed jam over half the omelette. Fold over the other half; sprinkle with icing sugar, cut in half and serve.

VARIATIONS
Use apricot jam mixed with 15ml / 1tbls toasted flaked almonds.

Puffy fruit omelette

9¼ mins

Standing time: none

4 eggs, separated
30ml / 2tbls milk
2.5ml / ½tsp caster sugar
large knob of butter

FILLING
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
312g / 11oz canned mandarin segments, drained and juice reserved
100g / 4oz strawberries, halved
icing sugar for dusting

SERVES 2

1 Prepare the filling: in a bowl, blend the cornflour with a little of the reserved mandarin juice until smooth, then add the remaining juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until clear and thickened, stirring every minute. Stir in the mandarins and strawberries and cook for a further 2 minutes, stirring once. Cover tightly with cling film to retain the heat and reserve while preparing and making the omelette.

2 Blend together the egg yolks, milk and sugar in a small bowl. Put the butter in a shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Swirl the butter over the base and sides of the dish to prevent the omelette sticking.

3 Meanwhile, whisk the egg whites in a grease-free bowl until stiff. Stir 15ml / 1tbls of the whisked egg whites into the yolks to lighten the consistency. Lightly fold egg yolk mixture into whisked egg whites.

4 Gently pour the mixture into the dish and cook at 50% (Medium) for 5-7 minutes until the centre of the omelette is set. Rotate the dish a quarter turn three times during cooking.

5 Spoon half the filling over half the omelette. Loosen omelette with a spatula and carefully fold in half. Spoon the remaining filling over the top. Sift icing sugar over the omelette. Cut in half and serve.

Puffy Fruit Omelette

VARIATION

Black cherry omelette: smoothly blend 15ml / 3tsp cornflour with 30ml / 2tbls kirsch. Stir in a 425g / 15oz can stoned black cherries. Cook at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes. Make omelette as directed in recipe but fill and top with the cherry mixture.

Cook's notes

If you prefer to use oil instead of butter for greasing, brush the base and sides of the dish with oil and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds before adding the eggs. Microwave the omelette following the instructions given in the particular recipes.

Harlequin omelette

5¼
mins

Standing time: none

4 eggs
30ml / 2tbls milk
salt and pepper
large knob of butter

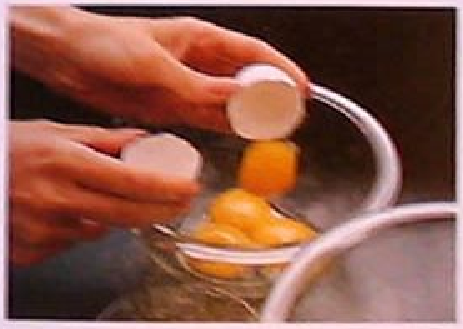
FILLING
¼ green pepper, seeded and chopped
¼ red pepper, seeded and chopped
½ small onion, chopped

SERVES 2

Cook's notes

If you prefer a cooked filling, put the chopped peppers and onion in a small bowl, then cover and cook at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.

How to microwave Harlequin omelette



Separate *the eggs, placing the whites in a large grease-free bowl and the yolks in a small bowl.*

Whisk *the whites until stiff. Add the milk and seasoning to the egg yolks and blend together.*

Gently *fold the egg yolk mixture into the egg whites, using a rubber spatula or a large metal spoon.*

Melt *butter in a covered, shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish at 100% (High) for 15-20 seconds. Pour in egg mixture. Cook at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes.*

Lift *edges of omelette with a spatula to allow any uncooked egg mixture underneath to run over base of dish. Microwave for a further 2-3 minutes until the centre is set.*

Sprinkle *two-thirds of the filling over half the omelette. Loosen edges of omelette and fold in half. Sprinkle remaining filling ingredients over the top. Cut in half and serve.*

Omelette Arnold Bennett

Spiced yoghurt omelette

4¼ mins

Standing time: none

4 eggs, separated
large knob of butter
150ml / 5fl oz natural yoghurt
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground nutmeg
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar

SERVES 2

1 In a small bowl, mix the egg yolks together lightly. Put the butter in a shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted, then swirl the butter over the base and sides of the dish.
2 Whisk egg whites in a large grease-free bowl until stiff. Stir 15ml / 1tbls of the whisked egg whites into the egg yolks. Lightly fold the egg yolk mixture into the egg whites. Gently pour the mixture into the dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes or until partially set, then lift the edges to allow any uncooked egg mixture to run over the base of the dish.
3 Mix together the yoghurt, nutmeg and sugar, pour over the omelette and cook for a further 1 minute. Serve at once.

Omelette Arnold Bennett

9¾ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz smoked haddock
150ml / 5fl oz double cream
4 eggs, separated
pepper
large knob of butter
25g / 1oz Leicester cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbs chopped parsley

SERVES 2

1 Put the haddock on a plate, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until the flesh flakes easily. Discard skin and bones and flake the fish fairly finely, then mix with 30ml / 2tbls of the cream. Leave to cool, then mix in the egg yolks and pepper to taste.
2 Put the butter in a shallow 20cm / 8in heatproof glass pie dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Swirl butter over the base and sides of the dish to prevent the omelette sticking.
3 Whisk the egg whites in a large grease-free bowl until stiff, then lightly fold in the fish and egg yolk mixture. Gently pour the mixture into the dish and cook at 50% (Medium) for 6-8 minutes until the centre is almost set. Rotate dish a quarter turn three times during cooking to ensure omelette rises evenly.
4 Pour the remaining cream over the omelette and sprinkle with the cheese. Cook at 50% (Medium) for a further 1-2 minutes or until the cheese melts and omelette is set. Sprinkle the omelette with the chopped parsley, cut in half and serve at once, accompanied by a tomato salad and crusty bread.

GOOD FAST FOOD

Canny beans

Make more of beans — with the microwave you can cook up a rich variety of tasty, protein-packed main course dishes in under 25 minutes.

There's more to canned pulses (beans, peas and lentils) than the ubiquitous baked beans in tomato sauce. Their great advantage is that they are already cooked. Unlike their dried counterparts they do not need hours of soaking followed by slow, gentle simmering to make them tender. They can be speedily heated up in the microwave with other ingredients to make hearty nourishing dishes. Because the cooking is so quick, the beans hold their shape.

Keep a selection in stock so you can cook up quick nourishing dishes, and easily ring the changes. Look for mealy-textured broad beans, glossy red kidney beans, nutty chick peas, ivory coloured butter beans, speckled borlottis, delicately flavoured haricots, brown lentils and the kidney-shaped cannellini beans.

Beans are healthy — low in fat, but high in protein, minerals (especially iron) and fibre. Though each kind has a distinctive taste of its own, all combine well with other flavours.

Canned pulses keep well for up to 1 year. Discard cans with puffed or 'blown' tops, as these are not suitable for eating. When buying, avoid dented or rusty cans.

Beans are canned in a solution of salt and — sometimes — sugar. Drain beans well, then rinse them quickly under cold water if liked, before using.

Beany Salad Bowl

PAUL WEBSTER

Beany salad bowl

3 mins

Standing time: none

Though this salad is served cold, the beans are heated in the dressing, so that they absorb its herby flavour. You can vary the beans according to what you have to hand. Serve the salad in a bowl lined with lettuce and red radicchio and garnish with olives.

400g / 14oz can Borlotti beans
400g / 14oz can flageolets
220g / 7.5oz can chick peas
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
2 celery stalks, sliced
50g / 2oz spring onions, chopped

DRESSING
1 garlic clove, crushed
grated zest of ½ lemon
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
salt and pepper

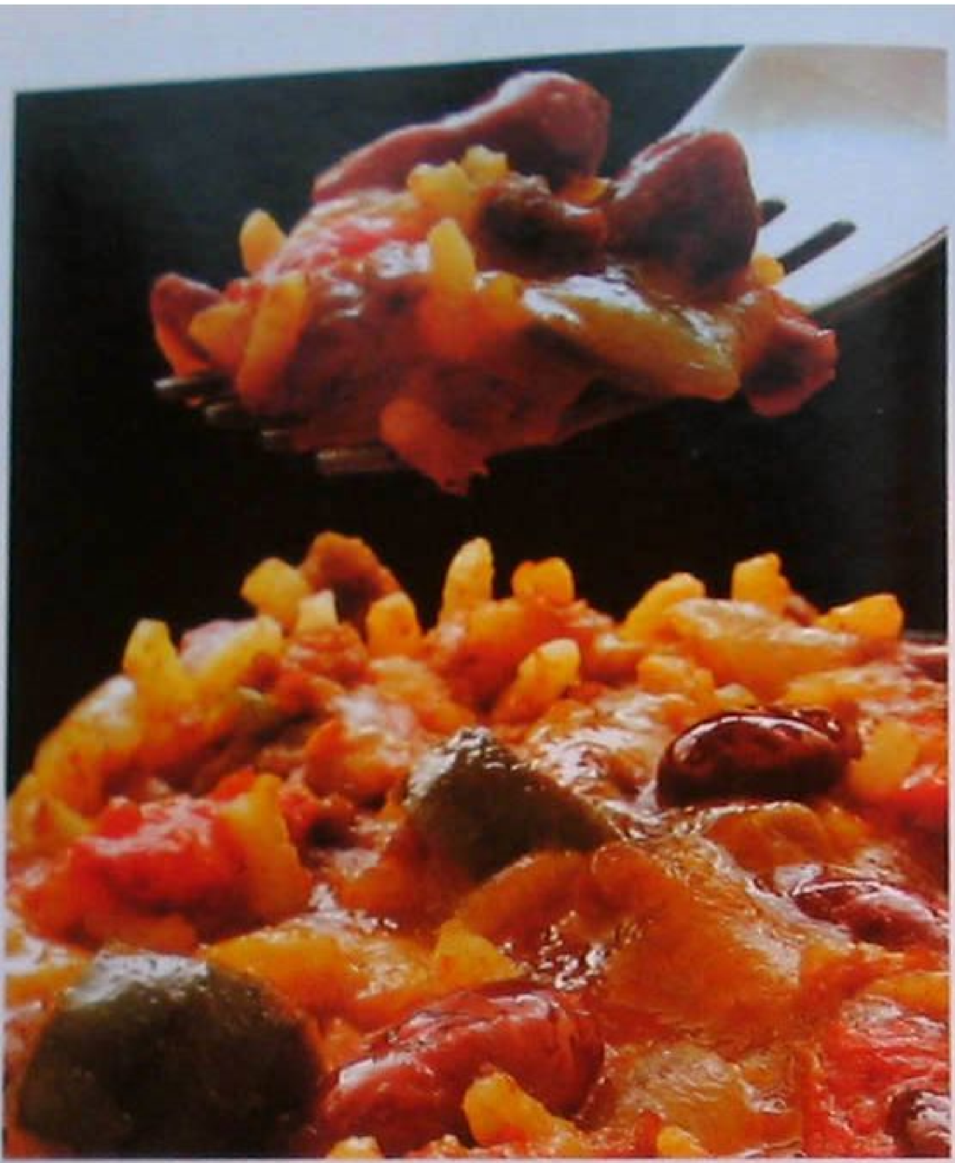
SERVES 6-8

1 Drain beans, and chick peas, then mix together in a large bowl.
2 Whisk the ingredients for the dressing together in a bowl, then pour over the beans. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once.
3 Leave for about 15 minutes, or until cold, stirring several times.
4 Just before serving, add the prepared vegetables to the beans and toss together.

Microtips

To heat baked beans in tomato sauce, tip contents of a 400g / 14oz can into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring once or twice. Microwave half a can for 1-2 minutes.

Never microwave baked beans in their metal cans. Always empty the contents into a microwave container before heating.



Rice and Beans

Rice and beans

16 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

There's just enough chilli powder in this casserole to give a pleasant 'kick' without making it too hot.

350g / 12oz lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and cut into large dice
1 garlic clove, crushed
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
220g / 7.5oz can kidney beans, drained
175g / 6oz quick-cook rice
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the beef in a casserole, with the onion, green pepper and garlic. Mix well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring twice, until beef is no longer pink and vegetables are tender.
2 Drain off excess fat. Break up the meat with a fork. Stir in the tomatoes, beans, rice, sugar and chilli powder. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, stirring twice, until the rice is tender.
3 Sprinkle cheese on top. Leave to stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes until the rice softens and the cheese melts. Season to taste.

VARIATION
Rice and beans is an inexpensive dish for impromptu entertaining. Double the quantities to serve eight. Microwave the meat and vegetables for 8 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and microwave for a further 18 minutes.

Bean and frankfurter bake

10½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

1 red-skinned dessert apple, cored and roughly chopped
1 small onion, chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls black treacle
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
1.5ml / ¼tsp made mustard
430g / 16oz can kidney beans, drained
2 × 220g / 7.7 oz cans curried baked beans
225g / 8oz frankfurters, cut in 12mm / ½in pieces
½ × 220g / 7.5oz can pineapple pieces, drained
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the apple, onion and butter or margarine into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring once, until onion is tender.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the salt and pepper. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring twice, until heated through. Stand 2-3 minutes. Check the seasoning and serve.

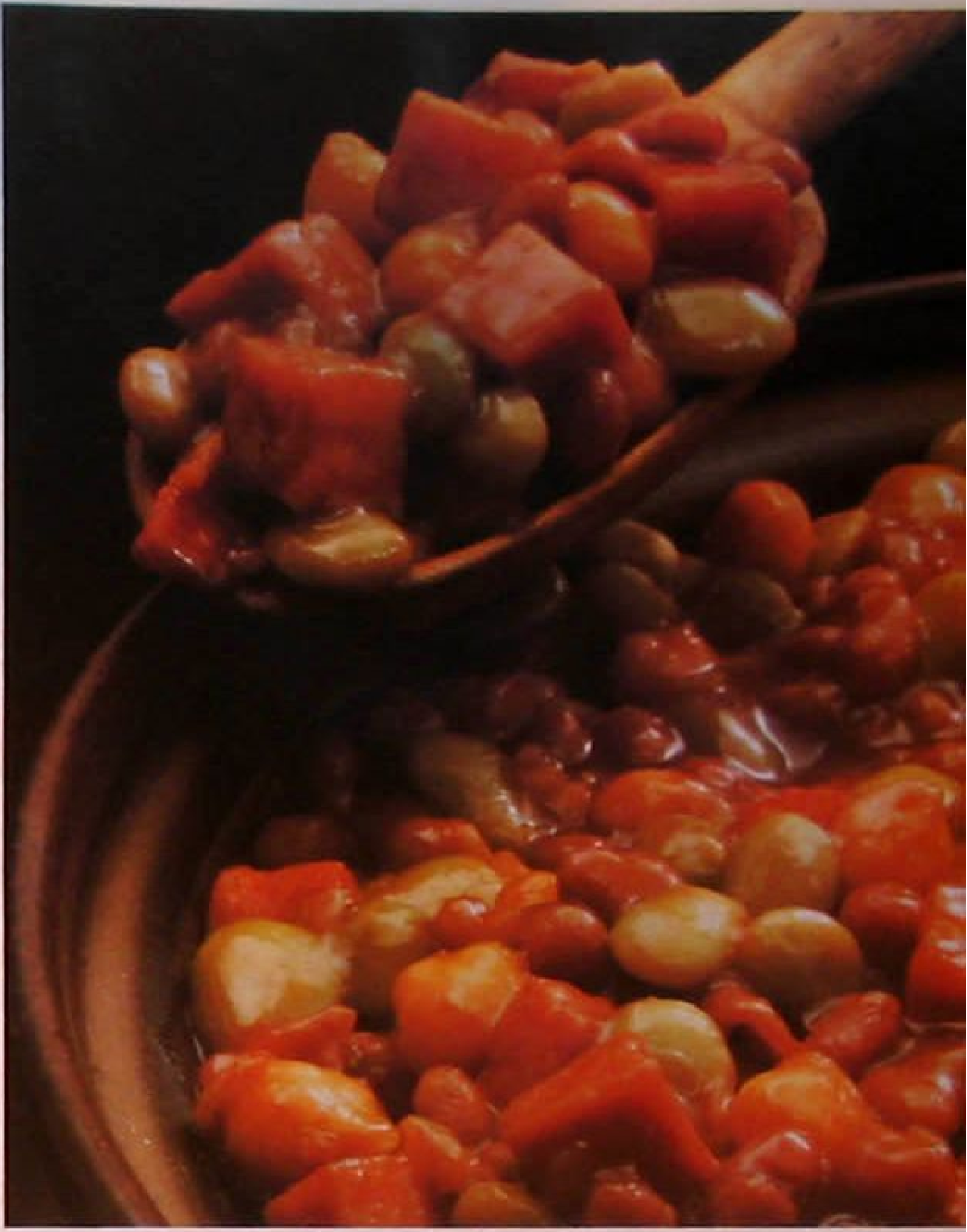
VARIATION
Use sliced, cooked chipolata pork sausages and a small can of sliced peaches, drained, instead of the frankfurters and pineapple.

Cook's notes

Do not store left-over beans in the can. Tip into a plastic container, cover and refrigerate. Use up quickly. Left-over beans can be added to soups, stews and casseroles.

Freezer notes

Left-over beans can be frozen with a little of their liquid for up to 2 months. To thaw 175g / 6oz frozen beans, microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5 minutes; stir once.



Ham bean pot

25 mins

Standing time: none

A substantial, warming hot pot, spicy with barbecue sauce.

6 rashers streaky bacon, cut into 12mm / ½in pieces
1 onion, chopped
3 potatoes, sliced
450g / 15.9oz can barbecue beans
430g / 15.2oz can broad beans, drained
225g / 8oz cooked ham, cut into 12mm / ½in pieces
15ml / 1tbls barbecue sauce

Ham Bean Pot

5ml / 1tsp made mustard
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
pepper to taste

SERVES 6-8

1 Place bacon, onion and potatoes in a casserole and cover with a sheet of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once.
2 Stir in remaining ingredients, except the pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 21 minutes, or until piping hot, stirring twice. Season with pepper.

Italian Vegetable Soup

Italian vegetable soup

22 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

A colourful soup that makes a satisfying lunch or supper.

1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
410g / 14½oz can haricot beans, drained
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
50g / 2oz quick-cook rice
1 courgette, halved lengthways and thinly sliced
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1 bay leaf
75ml / 3fl oz red wine
375ml / 15fl oz water
1 vegetable stock cube
salt and pepper
30-45ml / 2-3tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Put onion, garlic, celery, green pepper and oil into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until tender, stirring once.
2 Mix in the remaining ingredients except the salt, pepper and cheese. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 18-20 minutes, stirring two or three times. Remove the bay leaf.
3 Stand for 2-3 minutes. Check the seasoning and serve, sprinkled with Parmesan cheese.

VARIATION

Use 50g / 2oz finely shredded cabbage instead of courgettes.

Italian vegetable soup for two: omit 410g / 14½oz can haricot beans and substitute a 220g / 7.5oz can baked beans in tomato sauce. Halve the remaining soup ingredients. Microwave vegetables at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Add remaining soup ingredients and cook for 10-15 minutes.

Butter bean pâté

6 mins

Standing time: none

Butter beans have a mild flavour, so don't be frightened to add plenty of flavourings and seasonings to this versatile pâté. To serve, spread generously in wholemeal rolls and add tomato slices for a packed lunch, garnish with sliced olives and parsley sprigs and serve as a starter, with crispbread or fingers of black rye bread, or serve as a dip for raw vegetables, such as carrot fingers or celery stalks.

1 small onion, coarsely chopped
1-2 garlic cloves, crushed
22ml / 1½tbls olive oil
430g / 15.2oz can butter beans, drained
15ml / 1tbls single cream or evaporated milk
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce
5ml / 1tsp French mustard
2.5ml / ½tsp wine vinegar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

VARIATIONS

Ham: mix 75g / 3oz diced, cooked ham into pâté. Garnish with sliced spring onions.

Cheese: mix 100g / 4oz grated Cheddar cheese into pâté, with a little more cream if needed. Garnish the pâté with celery leaves and chives.

Cook's notes

Butter bean pâté should have a slightly coarse texture — take care to avoid over-processing or the texture will be gluey.

If you don't have a food processor, mash the beans well, then purée in a blender in batches. Add a little extra cream if necessary to stop blades sticking.

The pâté can be prepared the day before and stored, tightly covered, in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before serving.

How to microwave Butter bean pâté

Put *the onion, garlic and oil into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring twice, or until soft. Add beans and mix well.*

Purée *briefly in a food processor until beans are broken up. Add remaining ingredients and process again. Add a little extra cream if very stiff.*

Pack *into serving dishes, smooth surface, or score with a fork. Garnish with sliced black olives and parsley sprigs. Serve with rolls or rye bread.*

RAY DUNS

Sweet freezer flans

For advance party planning or simply a sweet treat in reserve, make up and freeze one of these delectable desserts, which can be thawed in just a few minutes in the microwave.

Sweet flans are always popular — and so easy to make. The recipes chosen here can be served to the family, yet are impressive enough for a dinner party. Although their freezer life is fairly short (depending on the filling), they make an excellent standby.

All the flans use a Biscuit Crumb Case. This is ideally suited to the microwave — it takes only 2 minutes to cook and turns out a rich nutty brown quite naturally.

To ensure the fillings are light and fluffy, always beat the mixture well. Take care not to over-cook flans, as fillings firm on cooling.

Certain toppings can be frozen, but more elaborate decorations are best added after thawing to avoid damage during storage.

When freezing, allow the filled flans to cool completely, then chill in the refrigerator before packing in rigid containers. Label clearly and freeze no longer than the recommended time.

When thawing in the microwave, watch for melting on the surface of the flans. You will find some fillings more delicate than others. Standing time is essential as it allows the flans to thaw through to the centre.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Substitute sweetened whipped cream for frozen topping. Instead of canned pie fillings, use canned fruit, drained and mashed.

Chocolate Cherry Flan

Microtips

The time in the recipe time box refers to microwaving before freezing. This includes microwaving the Biscuit Crumb Case. Standing time is counted after thawing.

Biscuit crumb case

2 mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz butter or margarine
225g / 8oz digestive or plain, sweet biscuits, crushed
45ml / 3tbls demerara or granulated sugar

MAKES A 23cm / 9in CASE

1 Place the butter or margarine in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds or until melted. Stir in the biscuit crumbs and sugar, mixing well.

2 Press the crumb mixture firmly over the base and sides, or just the base, of a freezerproof 23cm / 9in glass pie dish, reserving 15ml / 1tbls for decorating filled flan if liked.

3 Stand the dish on an upturned plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Rotate dish half a turn and microwave for a further 45-60 seconds. Cool before adding the filling.

VARIATIONS

Any biscuit that crumbles easily can be used. Try chocolate chip cookies, coconut or ginger biscuits.

Lemon cheese flan

16½ mins

Thawing time: 5 mins

Standing after thawing: 15 mins

23cm / 9in Ginger Crumb Case (see recipe above) with 15ml / 1tbls crumbs reserved

FILLING

225g / 8oz cream cheese
2 eggs
100g / 4oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
200ml / 7fl oz soured cream

SERVES 6

1 Place the cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to soften. Beat in the eggs, sugar, lemon juice, zest and soured cream. Blend well.

2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes until heated, stirring three times. Pour into case; sprinkle with the reserved crumbs.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, or until almost set; rotate the dish quarter turn three times. Cool.

4 To freeze; chill, then wrap, seal, label and freeze for no longer than three months.

TO SERVE

Unwrap and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5 minutes, rotating half turn after three minutes. Leave to stand for 15 minutes.

Lemon Cheese Flan

Chocolate cherry flan

14 mins

Thawing time: 3-5 mins

Standing after thawing: 15-20 mins

23cm / 9in Biscuit Crumb Case (see above)

FILLING

225g / 8oz cream cheese
2 eggs
100g / 4oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls milk
50g / 2oz plain chocolate, melted (see Microtips, right)

TOPPING

½ × 685ml / 1.2pt carton frozen whipped topping*
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar
glacé cherries to decorate

SERVES 4-6

1 Whisk the cream cheese with the eggs, sugar, milk and melted chocolate until well blended. Pour into the prepared crumb case.

2 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 12-16 minutes until just set, rotating the dish a half turn three times during cooking. Allow to cool.

3 Beat the frozen whipped topping with the icing sugar until smooth. Spread on top of the cooled flan, then decorate.

4 To freeze: open-freeze, then pack, label and freeze no longer than one month.

TO SERVE

Unwrap and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-5 minutes, checking frequently for melting and giving the dish a half turn after 2 minutes. Stand for 15-20 minutes.

Microtips

To melt 50g / 2oz chocolate, break up and place in a dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes or until melted. Allow to cool slightly before using.

Chocolate vanilla flan

2
mins

Thawing time: 30-60 secs

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

23cm / 9in Biscuit Crumb Case
(see page 951)

FILLING AND TOPPING
227g / 8oz jar hazelnut-chocolate spread
575ml / 1pt vanilla ice cream
almond flavouring
45ml / 3tbls chocolate sauce
½ × 685ml / 1.2pt carton frozen whipped topping*

SERVES 6

1 Spread the hazelnut chocolate spread over prepared crumb case.
2 Beat ice cream with a few drops of almond flavouring. Spoon into crumb case; cover. Freeze 1 hour.
3 Fold chocolate sauce into the whipped topping. Swirl on top of ice cream. Open-freeze until firm.
4 To freeze: pack, seal, label and freeze no longer than one month.

TO SERVE
Unwrap and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-60 seconds. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

Blackcurrant-lemon flan

4½
mins

Thawing time: 2-3½ mins

Standing after thawing: 10-15 mins

175g / 6oz butter or margarine
450g / 1lb digestive or coconut biscuits, crushed
75g / 3oz demerara sugar

FILLING
3 eggs, separated
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls grated lemon zest
2 × 300g / 11oz packets blackcurrant pure-fruit dessert topping or filling*
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream, whipped

MAKES 2 × 23cm / 9in FLANS

Above: *Blackcurrant-Lemon Flan*
Left: *Chocolate Vanilla Flan*

Step-by-step to Blackcurrant lemon flan

Prepare *filling: mix egg yolks, half the caster sugar, the lemon juice and zest in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes, stirring two or three times, until thick. Cool.*

Line *two 23cm / 9in microwave-freezer dishes with greaseproof paper. Microwave butter, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Stir in 350g / 12oz biscuit crumbs and the demerara sugar.*

Press *half the crumb mixture firmly over the base of each prepared dish. Gently spoon half the blackcurrant filling over each crumb base, taking care not to lift crumbs. Set aside.*

Whisk *the egg whites until they stand in stiff peaks. Whisk in remaining caster sugar until thick and glossy. Fold whipped cream into mixture then fold into the beaten egg whites.*

Spoon *half the creamy lemon mixture evenly over the blackcurrant filling in each dish. Sprinkle the remaining biscuit crumbs over the top. Wrap, seal, label and freeze for up to two weeks.*

To serve, *unwrap one flan and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-3½ minutes until a cocktail stick can be inserted easily in the centre; watch for melting. Let stand 10-15 minutes.*

Iced honeycomb flan

5 mins

Thawing time: 1½-2 mins

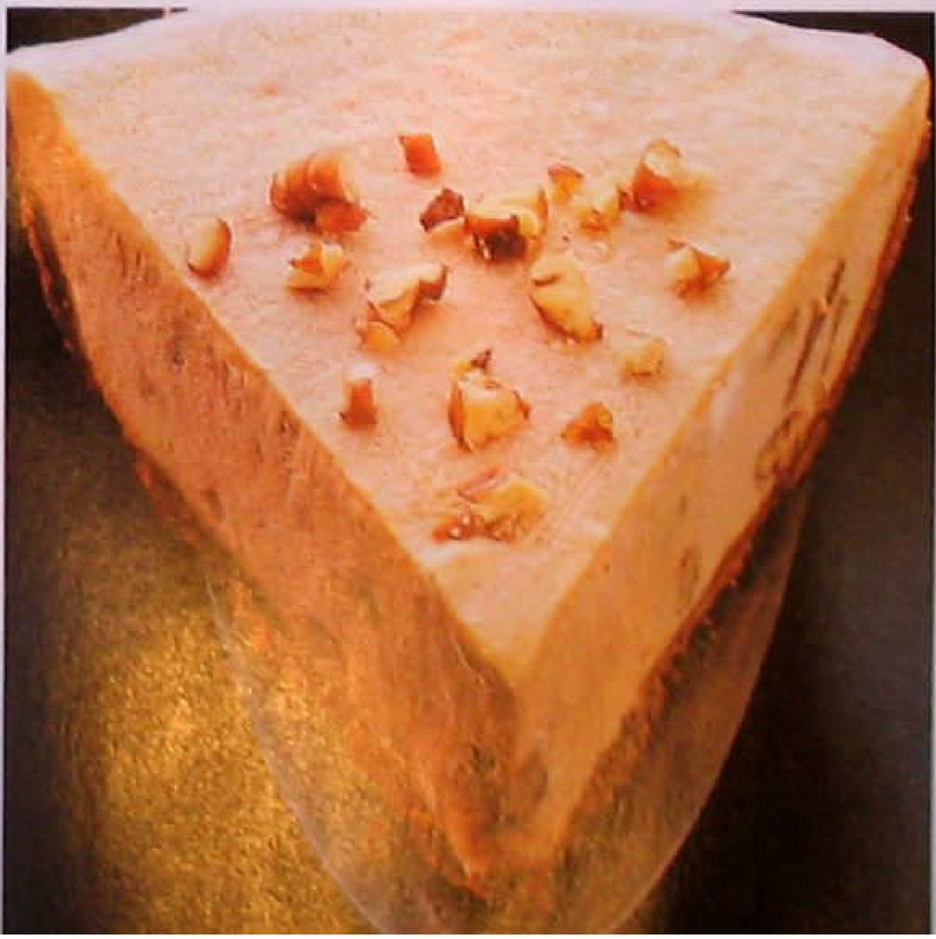
Standing after thawing: 5-10 mins

23cm / 9in Biscuit Crumb Case (see page 951)

FILLING

2 eggs, separated
75g / 3oz soft light brown sugar
125ml / 4fl oz milk
15ml / 1tbls coffee and chicory flavouring
150ml / ½pt double cream
3 × 20g / ¾oz milk chocolate honeycomb bars, crushed (see Cook's notes, page 954)
50g / 2oz walnut halves, crushed chopped walnuts, to serve

SERVES 6



Iced Honeycomb Flan

1 Blend the egg yolks with sugar, milk and flavouring. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes until thick, stirring twice; cool. Strain into a freezer container. Cover and freeze for 1½-2 hours (see Cook's notes, below).
2 Whip the cream until standing in soft peaks. Whisk the egg whites until standing in soft peaks.
3 Turn the partially frozen mixture into a bowl and stir until softened. Fold in the whipped cream, crushed bars and walnuts. Fold in the egg whites. Pour into the prepared crumb case.
4 To freeze: wrap, label and freeze up to three months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes, checking for melting. Sprinkle with nuts. Stand 5-10 minutes.

Cook's notes

To ease crushing honeycomb bars, freeze in a polythene bag for 1 hour, then crush with a rolling pin.

Partially freezing the egg yolk mixture before adding cream and eggs results in a lighter mixture.

Strawberry vanilla flan

16½ mins

Thawing time: 2 mins

Standing after thawing: 20-25 mins

23cm / 9in Biscuit Crumb Case (see page 951)

FILLING AND DECORATION
225g / 8oz cream cheese
2 eggs
100g / 4oz sugar
15ml / 1tbls milk
finely grated zest of 1 small orange (optional)
200ml / 7fl oz soured cream
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
150ml / ¼pt double cream, whipped to soft peak stage
300g / 11oz packet strawberry pure-fruit dessert topping or filling*

SERVES 6

1 Place the cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to soften. Beat in the eggs, sugar, milk, orange zest if used, and soured cream.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, stirring three times, until thoroughly heated. Stir in the vanilla flavouring, blending well. Pour into the prepared crumb case.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes or until almost set so the centre is still slightly soft; rotate the dish a quarter turn three times. Allow to cool.
4 Place the cream in a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle and pipe a border around the edge of the flan. Spoon the strawberry topping in the centre.
5 To freeze: open-freeze, then label and return to the freezer for no longer than three months.

TO SERVE
Remove flan from container and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes, checking constantly for melting. Stand for 20-25 minutes.

Microtips

If flans start to melt during thawing time, try giving the dish a quarter turn; the affected area may have been exposed to a hot spot in the cooker. If melting continues, stop microwaving and stand a little longer than time given in recipe.

Strawberry Vanilla Flan

Chocolate fudge flan

9 mins

Thawing time: 3-5 mins

Standing after thawing: 15 mins

23cm / 9cm Biscuit Crumb Case (see page 951)

FILLING
100g / 4oz sugar
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
salt
400ml / 14fl oz milk
2 eggs, beaten
175g / 6oz chocolate chips
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

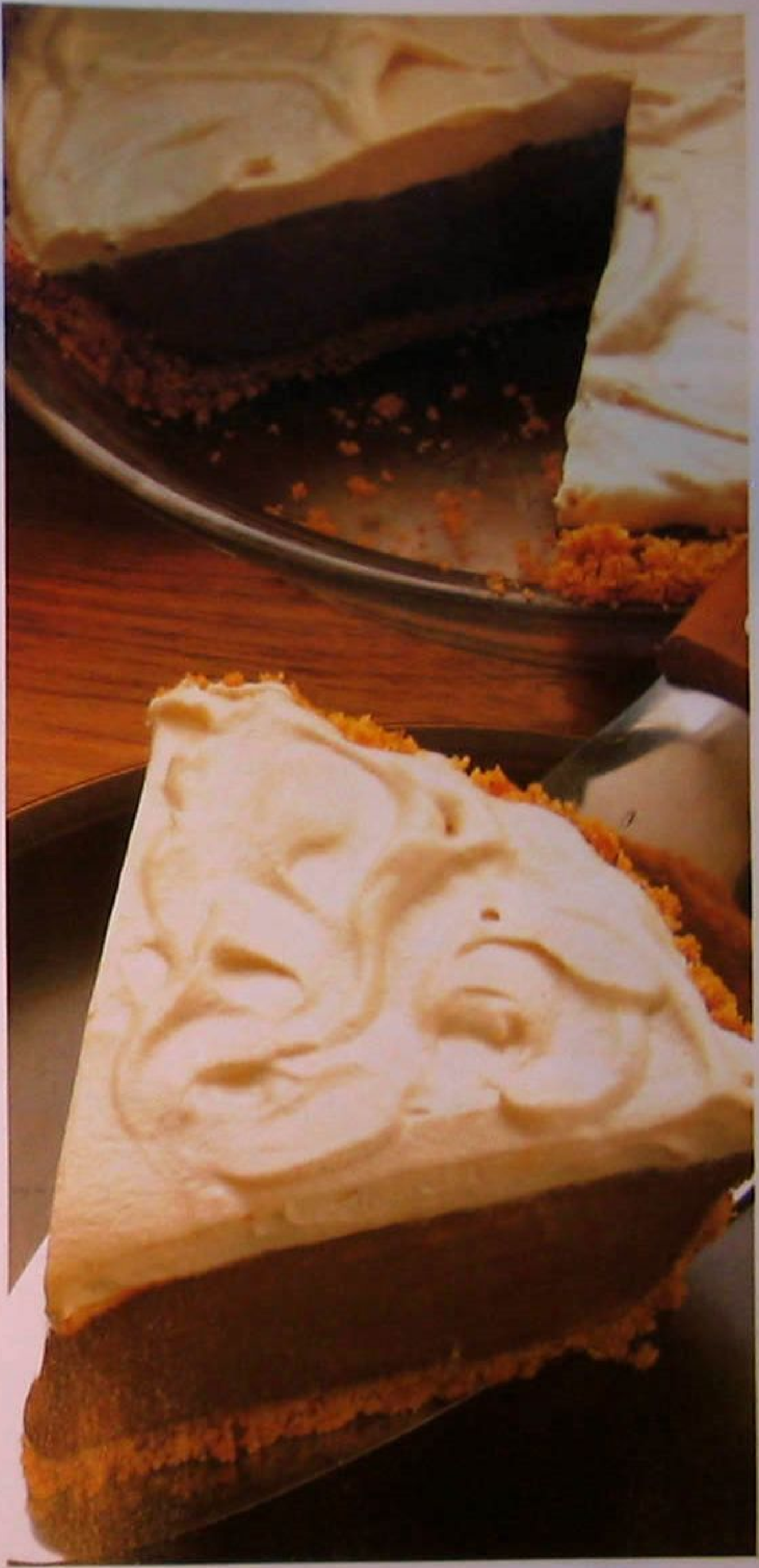
TOPPING
30ml / 2tbls coffee liqueur
685ml / 1.2pt carton frozen whipped topping*

SERVES 6

1 Mix the sugar, cornflour and salt in a bowl. Add a little milk, blending well, then gradually add the rest. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring two or three times with a whisk until thick. Stir a small amount of this hot mixture into the eggs, then pour back into the bowl and whisk until well blended.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, whisking twice, until very thick. Stir in the chocolate chips and vanilla flavouring and mix until melted. Pour into the prepared crumb case; cool, then chill until set.
3 Mix the coffee liqueur with the frozen whipped topping and swirl over the top of the flan.
4 To freeze: open-freeze, pack, label and freeze up to two weeks.

TO SERVE
Unwrap and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-5 minutes, or until a wooden cocktail stick can be inserted easily into the centre of the filling; rotate the dish half turn two or three times during cooking. Stand for 15 minutes.

VARIATION
Use chocolate biscuits in place of sweet to make the crumb case.



Chocolate Fudge Flan

Red snapper de luxe

Whole fish cooks to perfection in the microwave — and red snapper is no exception. This exotic, but marvellously easy, dish is ready in under 18 minutes and provides a tempting and unusual feast.

Red snapper* cook superbly in the microwave, retaining all their flavour and moist texture. To ensure succulent results the fish, flavourings and vegetables are wrapped in greaseproof paper parcels for cooking — remember that the fish completes its cooking during the standing time. The creamy wine sauce is then quickly and conveniently microwaved during this time.

As red snapper is a relatively large fish, with plenty of flesh, you will find that two average-sized fish

RAY DUNS

provide four generous portions — and filleting is easy (see step 5).

This colourful fish dish, with its dainty strips of sweet pepper, spring onion and ginger slices, and creamy wine sauce, makes a stylish special occasion meal that is cooked with ease. For the most attractive results, use a mixture of red, yellow and green peppers. Serve with lightly cooked cauliflower florets, French green beans and a dish of sauté potatoes.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use snapper for this recipe.

Freezer notes

This dish can be made with frozen snapper, so it is well worth keeping some in the freezer. Place the fish (one at a time) in a shallow dish, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until thawed, turning fish over halfway through. Rinse in cold water until cavity is no longer icy, then pat dry before using.

Red snapper de luxe

12½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

- 2 red snapper*, each about 450-500g / 1-1½lb, scaled, gutted and cleaned
- salt and pepper
- 25g / 1oz butter or margarine
- grated zest of ½ lemon
- 4 spring onions, sliced diagonally
- 1½ sweet peppers, seeded and finely sliced
- 2.5cm / 1in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and cut into fine slivers
- 30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley

SAUCE
- 50g / 2oz butter
- 4 spring onions, sliced diagonally
- 30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
- 50g / 2oz plain flour
- 300ml / ½pt fish stock
- 150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
- 45-90ml / 3-6tbls double cream

SERVES 4

How to microwave Red snapper de luxe

Season *the fish, inside and out, with salt and pepper. Cut two squares of greaseproof paper about three times the size of the fish. Grease the paper lightly. Melt the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds.*

Add *lemon zest. Brush fish with lemony butter and place on the paper. Combine vegetables, ginger and parsley; spoon half over each fish. Pour over any remaining butter. Enclose in paper; fold edges over twice to seal.*

Place *the parcels on a flat baking dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes or until the fish flakes easily when tested with a fork; rearrange once halfway through cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes to complete the cooking.*

Make sauce: *Mix butter, onions and parsley in a bowl; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in flour, then gradually add stock and wine Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring twice. Add cream and seasoning to taste.*

Open *parcels and spoon vegetables on to hot plates. Cut heads and tails off fish. Slit skin along backbones; ease top fillets away from bones. Remove bones; rearrange the top and bottom fillets on plates. Serve with sauce.*

Cook's notes

The fishmonger will normally scale and gut the fish if asked. If you would rather prepare it yourself, use the blunt edge of a knife and scrape off the scales by working from the tail to the head (against the scales). Do this on a board on a large sheet of newspaper, as the scales tend to scatter.

To gut the fish, make a slit along the belly, below the head and two-thirds of the way along its length. Scrape out the innards, then rinse the cavity well and pat dry with absorbent paper.

Microwaving dried fruit

Quick, clean and easy to use, dried fruit is an excellent store-cupboard standby. In moments it can be microwaved into some deliciously succulent sweet or savoury dishes.

Take a look along any supermarket shelf at the range of dried fruit on offer. There are far more than the familiar raisins and prunes — dried bananas, apple rings, pears are just some of those available.

Types of dried fruit

There are three types of dried fruit: the ordinary ones, which need soaking before using; the tenderized or 'no need to soak' fruit, or semi-dried fruit, none of which require soaking.

Overnight soaking: all large dried fruit such as pears, peaches or figs requires soaking before using. Use twice as much tepid liquid as fruit to cover the fruit generously. The liquid can be water or, for more flavour, try cold black tea with brandy or sherry to flavour, or unsweetened fruit juice. Add flavourings such as a cinnamon stick or a slice of lemon, if liked. Soak for at least eight hours or overnight. Drain.

Short soaking: this is also suitable for large fruit, but is a time-saving alternative to overnight soaking. Cover the fruit in cold water, bring to boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Leave, covered, for 40 minutes before draining and using.

Plumping: small dried fruit such as currants and raisins, which can be used without soaking, can be plumped up in the microwave if liked (see Microtips, page 960).

Storage

Use as much fruit as required from a packet, then simply transfer any unused fruit to an airtight container and store in a cool dark place. Keep unopened packets in the store cupboard. For best results, use within three months.

Dried Fruit Compote

Dried fruit compote

18
mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Use a combination of fruit, such as apples, figs, apricots, peaches, pears, prunes and raisins for this compote. Serve it warm or cold, topped with thick natural yoghurt. Remove the cinnamon sticks.

700g / 1½lb mixed dried fruit, soaked
45ml / 3tbls orange juice or brandy
3 large cinnamon sticks
60ml / 4tbls runny honey
1 orange, thinly sliced

SERVES 6-8

VARIATION

Dried fruit compote for four: halve all the ingredients. Microwave the dried fruit with the water, juice and cinnamon for 8-10 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and microwave for a further 2 minutes. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

Microtips

It is important to stir dried fruit during microwaving — particularly if using alcohol. Otherwise, its high concentration of sugar can lead to spot burning.

Gammon with raisin sauce

11
mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

4 gammon steaks* (each about 100g / 4oz)

SAUCE
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
pinch of ground cloves
225ml / 8fl oz apple juice
75g / 3oz raisins
10ml / 2tsp butter or margarine

SERVES 4

1 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or follow manufacturer's instructions. Add steaks and microwave for 1-2 minutes. Turn and microwave 2-3 minutes. Stand 3-5 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, mix brown sugar, cornflour, cinnamon, mustard and cloves. Blend in apple juice. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until thickened, stirring three times. Add raisins and butter and stir until melted.

VARIATION

For a sweet raisin sauce for desserts, omit mustard powder.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Ham steaks from leg or shoulder.

Gammon with Raisin Sauce

How to microwave Dried fruit compote

Drain *the fruit; measure the liquid and make up to 575ml / 1pt with water. Place all in a large bowl with the juice or brandy and cinnamon.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-18 minutes, or until the fruit is tender, stirring well three times during cooking.*

Stir *in the honey and orange slices. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 2-3 minutes before serving.*

Muesli bars

13½ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz soft dark brown sugar
pinch of salt
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring
1 quantity Crunchy muesli (see right, but omit raisins)

MAKES 12

1 Put the butter in a bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until melted.

Muesli Bars

2 In a large bowl, combine the brown sugar, salt, eggs and almond flavouring. Beat in the melted butter and stir in the Crunchy muesli until coated. Press into a greased dish, about 23 × 25cm / 9 × 10in.

3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes, or until firm to the touch; rotate the dish a half turn and press the mixture down with a spatula every 2 minutes. Mark into 12 bars.

4 Allow to cool completely before removing from the dish. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to one week.

Microtips

To plump dried fruit, place 100g / 4oz dried fruit in a shallow bowl, sprinkle with 45ml / 3tbls liquid. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until the fruit is plump and swollen, stirring well once. Leave to stand, covered, for 2-3 minutes; drain.

Crunchy muesli

6½ mins

Standing time: none

Serve with milk or yoghurt

200g / 7oz porridge oats
50g / 2oz desiccated coconut
50g / 2oz flaked almonds
200ml / 7fl oz clear runny honey
50g / 2oz soft dark brown sugar
50ml / 2fl oz vegetable oil
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
75g / 3oz raisins
25g / 1oz dried apple rings, chopped

MAKES 700g / 1½lb

Cook's notes

If you forget to stir the muesli during cooling it sets in a solid lump. To soften and make it pliable again, microwave uncovered at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Break apart with a fork and let cool completely before storing.

When cool store the muesli in an airtight container for no longer than one to two weeks.

No-bake fruit cake

4½ mins

Standing time: none

Store this cake in an airtight container in a cool place for no longer than two weeks.

225g / 8oz mixed glacé fruit, chopped
175g / 6oz raisins
100g / 4oz dates, chopped
100g / 4oz chopped nuts
100g / 4oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
200g / 7oz dairy fudge*, cut in small pieces
2.5ml / ½tsp rum flavouring

MAKES 24-28 SLICES

1 Line the sides and base of a 900g / 2lb loaf dish (23 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in) with cling film.

2 In a large bowl, mix together the fruit and nuts. Stir in the biscuit crumbs, tossing to coat the fruit. Set aside.

3 In a medium-sized bowl, microwave the butter or margarine, covered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until melted. Add the fudge and continue to microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-5 minutes or until the fudge has melted and the mixture is smooth, stirring every minute. Stir into the fruit mixture together with the rum flavouring until evenly blended.

4 Spoon into the prepared tin and press down firmly. Cover and chill for at least four hours until set. Run a sharp knife under cold water and use to cut into slices.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use jersey caramels.

No-bake Fruit Cake

How to microwave Crunchy muesli

Mix *together the rolled oats, desiccated coconut and flaked almonds in a large bowl, stirring well to combine. Set on one side while preparing the boiling syrup mixture.*

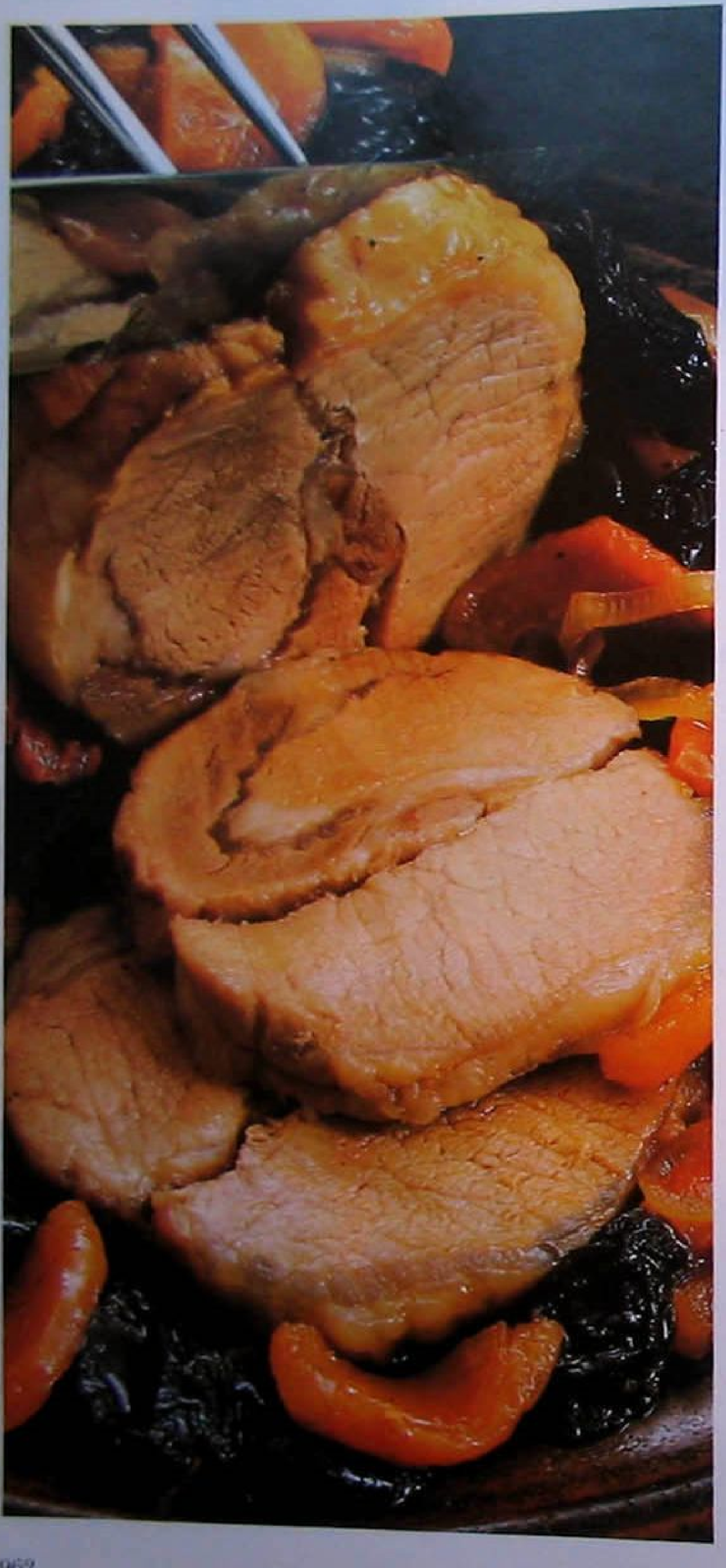
Combine *the remaining ingredients except the raisins and apples in a bowl or jug. Microwave, uncovered at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until boiling, stirring once.*

Pour *the boiling mixture over the oats, tossing to coat. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4½-6 minutes until mixture begins to stiffen and appear dry, stirring every 2 minutes.*

Microwave *for a further 30 seconds for crunchier cereal. Stir in the raisins and apple. Leave to cool for 1-1½ hours, stirring to break the muesli apart once or twice during cooling.*

Cook's notes

Dried fruit has a very high energy value as it takes between 1.8-2.7kg / 4-6lb fresh fruit to make 450g / 1lb dried, depending on the fruit. The fresh fruit is sun or air-dried to produce fruit with concentrated amounts of vitamins, minerals and sugar. This high sugar content means the fruit needs less added sugar during cooking, so either omit sugar or try using honey or syrup as sweet alternatives for extra flavour.



Fruity pork roast

44½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

175g / 6oz soft dark brown sugar
100g / 4oz 'no need to soak', or tenderized dried apricots
75g / 3oz 'no need to soak' prunes, halved and stoned
175ml / 6fl oz hot water
178ml / 6¼fl oz frozen concentrated orange juice, thawed (see Microtips)
1 small onion, sliced
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
salt and pepper
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
1.4kg / 3lb loin of pork, boned, rind removed

SERVES 6

1 In a medium-sized bowl, combine 100g / 4oz sugar, the apricots, prunes, hot water, 45ml / 3tbls orange juice, onion, ginger, salt and pepper. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8-12 minutes, stirring frequently.

2 Melt the butter, covered, in a small bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, then stir in the remaining sugar and orange juice.

3 Place the pork, fat side down, on a roasting rack. Brush with the orange butter mixture. Calculate the total cooking time, allowing 12-15 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Cover the meat and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for remaining first half of time.

4 Uncover meat and turn over. Spoon half fruit mixture over top. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for remaining time.

5 Spoon over remaining fruit. Stand, covered, 10 minutes.

Microtips

To thaw 178ml / 6¼fl oz frozen orange juice, remove the metal lid and surround from the carton. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-3 minutes, stirring twice. Stand for 5 minutes.

Fruity Pork Roast

Raisin pork with apples

22 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This makes a delicious and very simple Sunday lunch for two. Serve with a green vegetable, microwaved while the joint is standing.

700g / 1½lb boned loin of pork, rind removed
3 small dessert apples

STUFFING
30ml / 2tbls raisins
45ml / 3tbls maple syrup
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 2

1 Core and chop one apple. To make the stuffing, combine the chopped apple, raisins, maple syrup, soft brown sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl.

2 Cut through the centre of the pork from the lean side, without cutting the joint completely in half. Open out and spread some of the stuffing over the centre of the meat. Reshape the joint and tie with string to secure. Place on a roasting rack and cover loosely.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Reduce power 50% (Medium) for 15 minutes, rotating the roasting rack quarter turn twice during cooking.

4 Core the remaining apples. Cut a slit in the skin around the waist of each, then place on the rack next to the meat. Fill the centres with the remaining fruit stuffing. Baste the meat with any juices from the stuffing.

5 Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for a further 5-7 minutes, or until the centre of the pork is cooked to taste. Remove

from the cooker. Cover loosely with foil and let stand for 10 minutes before serving. (The apples tenderize on standing.)

VARIATION

Apricot pork with apples: Substitute four dried apricots and one prune for the raisins; soak and chop. Assemble and microwave as directed in the recipe. For a better contrast, use small green-skinned cooking apples.

Cook's notes

Remember to score the skin of each of the apples to be stuffed. This prevents heat building up under the skin during microwaving, which would cause the apples to split open and burst in the cooker.

American frostings 1

Dress up a plain undecorated cake with a smooth, creamy frosting and transform it from simple, everyday fare into a luscious centrepiece for a really tempting tea.

For a quick and easy way to add flair — and flavour to the plainest of sponges, you can't beat a speedy microwaved American frosting. Because frostings are thick enough to hold their shape, they can be used as an all-over, textured coating, as a topping and also as a filling. Unlike some sophisticated icings, frostings are easy to make and need no special skills to apply.

Texture is important — a frosting should be stiff enough to hold swirls but soft enough to have a moist appearance. Adjust the consistency by adding extra sifted icing sugar or more liquid in the form of fruit juice, milk, water or, for a special occasion, liqueur. Use the frosting as soon as it is ready. It stiffens if left to cool and will drag and tear the surface of the cake. If the frosting becomes too thick to spread easily while you are using it, thin it down with a few drops of liquid.

These American frostings can be stored in the refrigerator for several weeks. Cover the surface closely with cling film to prevent a crust forming. To use, see Microtips page 966.

When choosing a frosting for a cake, be adventurous and ring the changes. Almost any flavour will suit plain cake, but other good combinations would be orange and chocolate, coffee and walnut, mint and chocolate or maple and coffee, for example.

Dark Chocolate Frosting

FLAVOURINGS

To ring the changes, add any of the following to the basic quantity of frosting:

- **100g / 4oz finely chopped glacé fruit or mixed peel**
- **100g / 4oz stem ginger, finely chopped**
- **75g / 3oz walnuts, toasted almonds or hazelnuts, finely chopped**
- **50g / 2oz chocolate, finely grated**
- **75g / 3oz caramel or toffee, finely crushed**

Cook's notes

The basic quantity of frosting is sufficient to fill and top a 23cm / 9in round sandwich cake, to coat the top and sides of two shallow 23cm / 9in round cakes, or a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in rectangular cake, or to ice 24 cupcakes. If you want to fill a 23cm / 9in sandwich cake and coat the top and sides, make double the quantity.

Dark chocolate frosting

3
mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
60ml / 4tbls milk
30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder, sifted
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted
50g / 2oz plain chocolate
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter and milk in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, until the butter is bubbling.

2 Gradually stir in cocoa and icing sugar. Beat until smooth.

3 Break the chocolate into a small bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes until melted. Stir the chocolate into the frosting with the vanilla flavouring, then beat well until smooth.

Microtips

To soften refrigerated frostings, microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. If necessary, thin the softened frosting with a few drops of milk.

How to microwave frostings

Combine *the butter and liquid in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) until the butter is bubbling.*

Add *the sifted icing sugar and any flavourings. Beat well until the frosting is smooth.*

Beat in *a little extra liquid, a few drops at a time, if the frosting is too thick to spread easily.*

Add *extra sifted icing sugar if the frosting is too thin and runny. The frosting should hold swirls.*

Cook's notes

For the best results when making frostings: always sift the icing sugar — otherwise it will form small lumps. Never add colouring directly to the frosting: measure it in drops on to a spoon first to avoid over-colouring.

Microtips

Butter gives an unbeatable flavour. For good, rich results microwave with the liquid until bubbling. For economy, margarine can be used instead, but this is best in coffee, chocolate or other strongly-flavoured frostings.

How to frost cakes

Freeze *very light cakes for 10 minutes to make them easier to frost. Cover the sides thinly with frosting to set the crumbs, then cover with a thicker coat.*

Decorate *sides of cake further, if wished. Cover top thinly with frosting, then cover with a thick layer of the remaining frosting.*

Swirl *the frosting, using a palette knife or the back of a teaspoon. If liked, sprinkle the top with a little grated coconut or chopped nuts.*

Orange frosting

1 min

Standing time: none

Orange frosting makes a good flavour combination with plain, ginger, banana, apple, chocolate or orange cakes.

25g / 1oz butter
45ml / 3tbls orange juice
finely grated zest of 1 orange
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter and orange juice in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, or until bubbling.

2 Add the orange zest and mix well. Gradually add the icing sugar, beating until smooth.

VARIATION

Lemon frosting: substitute 30ml / 2tbls milk and 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice for the orange juice and use finely grated lemon zest instead of orange to flavour the frosting. Decorate with angelica 'diamonds'.

Hazelnut and coffee frosting

1 min

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
45ml / 3tbls milk
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted
50g / 2oz toasted hazelnuts, chopped
5ml / 1tsp chicory and coffee essence

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter in a bowl with the milk. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter is bubbling.

2 Gradually add the sifted icing sugar, beating it in until smooth. Add the hazelnuts and coffee essence and beat well.

VARIATION

If chicory and coffee essence is not available, a similar coffee flavour can be obtained by dissolving 5ml / 1tsp instant coffee powder or granules in 5ml / 1tsp boiling water. Add to the frosting with the hazelnuts.

Cherry nut frosting

1 min

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
45ml / 3tbls milk
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted
150g / 5oz glacé cherries, chopped
45ml / 3tbls walnuts, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
few drops of red food colouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter in a bowl with the milk. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter is bubbling.

2 Gradually add the sifted icing sugar. Mix in the cherries, nuts and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add a few drops of food colouring and beat well.

VARIATION

Pineapple frosting: substitute finely chopped glacé pineapple for the cherries. Omit the vanilla flavouring and use pineapple juice in place of the milk.

Veal loin chops

Veal is a tender, succulent meat — and veal loin chops are particularly easy to prepare and cook. Use your microwave to make the most of them.

Veal chops are well suited to cooking in the microwave as they stay moist and succulent while retaining all of their fine flavour.

The chops are a generous size, weighing about 175g / 6oz each and normally just under 12mm / ½in thick, so one chop per person is ample. Although veal is naturally tender, chops are best microwaved at 50% (Medium) and then allowed to stand for five minutes.

No browning dish is necessary for these recipes, since a variety of glazes are used to give a rich appetizing appearance. For best results, brush the chops with a buttery glaze to give extra succulence and some soy or Worcestershire sauce to add colour. Other ingredients, such as garlic or lemon juice can also be added for a more distinct flavour. Here, use gravy browning to colour, which will give a rich appearance.

Veal chops also cook well in a sauce, in which case a glaze is not necessary. Alternatively, serve with a sauce; see page 971.

Veal Chops on Pilaff

PAUL WEBSTER

Veal chops on pilaff

34¾ mins

Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
4 veal loin chops, 175g / 6oz each

PILAFF
225g / 8oz long-grain rice
500ml / 18fl oz boiling water
salt
small knob of butter or margarine
1 seeded, chopped red pepper
6 spring onions, chopped
45ml / 3tbls flaked almonds
30ml / 2tbls sultanas

SERVES 4

1 Make the pilaff; place rice, boiling water, salt and butter in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 12 minutes, stirring twice. Keep covered until needed.

2 Meanwhile, microwave butter at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Stir in sauce.

3 Place chops in a single layer on a baking dish with the meatiest parts to outside. Brush with half glaze.

4 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, turning and rearranging chops once and brushing with remaining glaze. Cover and set aside.

5 Microwave red pepper and spring onion, covered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until soft. Add rice with the almonds and sultanas.

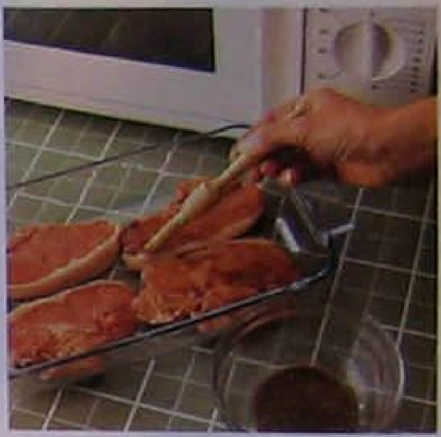
6 Spoon rice on to a microwave serving dish. Arrange the chops on top. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Serve with Courgette and Tomato Sauce (page 971), if liked.

Microtips

Always test meat is cooked before allowing to stand. The standing time gives meat time to tenderize, but it should be fully cooked after coming out of the microwave.

How to microwave Veal loin chops

Place *15g / ½oz butter in a small dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until butter has melted. Add 15ml / 1tbls soy or Worcestershire sauce and stir well.*



Arrange *veal loin chops in a single layer in a shallow baking dish with the fat to the inside and the meatiest parts to the outside. Brush evenly with half the butter and sauce glaze.*

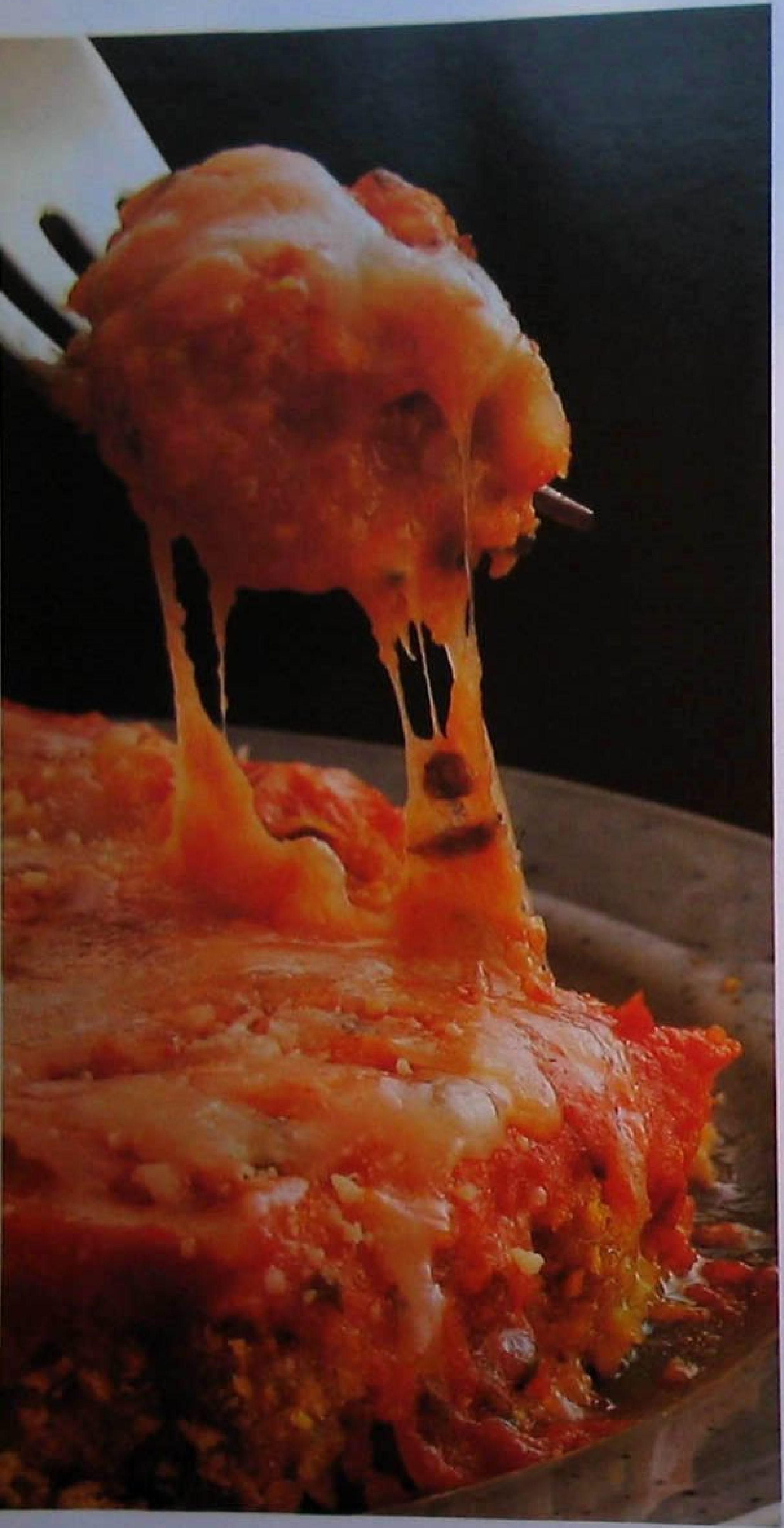
Cover *with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes. Turn and rearrange chops keeping fat to the inside. Brush with remaining glaze and microwave for a further 7-10 minutes.*

Test *chops are cooked by piercing the meat with a knife close to the bone — the meat should be tender and no longer pink while the juices should run clear. Allow chops to stand, covered with a lid, foil or greaseproof paper, for 5 minutes.*

Microwave times for Veal loin chops*

QUANTITY	TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM)	STANDING TIME	PROCEDURE
2	10-13 mins	5 mins	Turn and rearrange once during cooking
4	15-20 mins	5 mins	Turn and rearrange once during cooking
6	18-23 mins	5 mins	Turn and rearrange once during cooking

*Timings are based on chops weighing about 175g / 6oz each and 12mm / ½in thick



Italian veal chops

12½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Since the bone is removed from the chops in this recipe, and the meat is tenderized by beating out, it's possible to microwave it at a higher setting.

4 veal loin chops, about 175g / 6oz each
50g / 2oz cornflakes, finely crushed
1 egg, beaten

SAUCE
15ml / 1tbls olive or vegetable oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
500g / 18oz carton puréed tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
100g / 4oz mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Carefully cut out the bone from each of the chops and discard. Beat meat to a 6mm / ¼in thickness with a meat mallet.

2 Place cornflake crumbs on a sheet of greaseproof paper. Dip the veal in the beaten egg, then press into the crumbs, on both sides, coating evenly.

3 Lay veal in a shallow baking dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, or until meat is tender and juices run clear, rearranging meat once. Stand, covered for 5 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, make the sauce. Place oil and onion in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes until tender. Add the tomatoes and basil. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes or until hot.

5 Pour over chops, then cover with the mozzarella and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes until cheese melts and starts to bubble. Serve immediately accompanied by new potatoes and spinach.

Italian Veal Chops

Cheesy mustard sauce

4¼ mins

Standing time: none

This rich sauce complements the subtle taste of the veal well.

25g / 1oz butter
275ml / ½pt creamy milk
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls dry vermouth
100g / 4oz Red Leicester cheese, grated
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted.
2 Add milk, cornflour and the vermouth and stir well until blended. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until thickened, stirring after 2 minutes and then every minute.
3 Add the cheese, mustard and seasoning; stir until cheese melts.

Courgette and tomato sauce

8¼ mins

Standing time: none

This colourful vegetable sauce makes an excellent accompaniment to microwaved veal chops.

15g / ½ oz butter
4 small courgettes, sliced
2 large tomatoes, skinned and chopped
30ml / 2tbls red wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
pinch of dried oregano
pinch of paprika

SERVES 4

1 Melt the butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Add courgettes, re-cover and microwave for 2-3 minutes.
2 Add the tomatoes, vinegar, tomato purée, oregano and paprika and stir well. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 4-5 minutes.

Mushroom veal chops

20½ mins

Standing time: none

4 veal loin chops, 175g / 6oz each
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced

SAUCE
125ml / 4fl oz water
60ml / 4tbls white wine
15ml / 3tsp plain flour
20ml / 4tsp chopped chives
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp yeast extract
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
lemon slices, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Lay chops in a baking dish with the meatiest parts to the outside. Top with the mushrooms. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes.
2 Rearrange chops, keeping the mushrooms on top. Re-cover and microwave for a further 7-10 minutes or until the meat is tender and no longer pink. Drain off and reserve excess liquid. Set aside.
3 Blend remaining ingredients with the reserved juices in a bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-4 minutes or until thickened, whisking twice.
4 Spoon the sauce over the chops. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes or until heated. Garnish and serve.

Veal chops with orange

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 veal loin chops, 175g / 6oz each
juice and grated zest of 1 large orange
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp fresh thyme or 1.5ml / ¼tsp dried
pepper
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
orange slices and thyme sprigs, to garnish

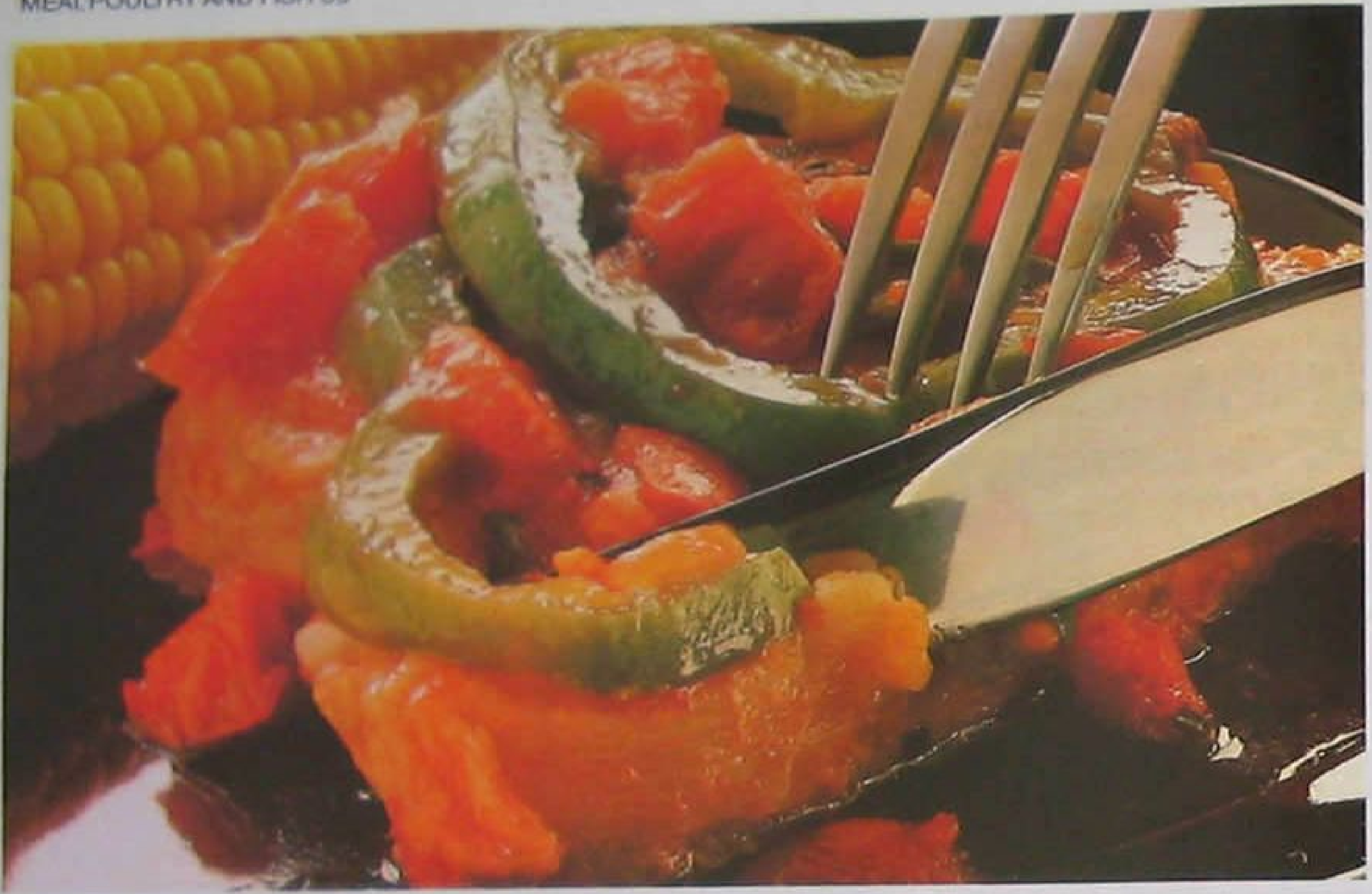
SERVES 4

1 Lay chops in a shallow baking dish with the meatiest parts to the outside.
2 Mix orange juice and zest, cinnamon, thyme, pepper and Worcestershire sauce together in a bowl then pour over the chops. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes.
3 Turn and re-arrange chops Continue microwaving for a further 7-10 minutes or until meat near the bone is no longer pink and juices run clear.
4 Stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

Mushroom Veal Chops

Slimmer's notes

If you are watching your weight, choose recipes that do not include butter in the glaze and trim away any fat before cooking. Veal Chops with Orange is a reasonably 'slimline' recipe — a mere 205Cal / 860kJ per chop.



Piquant Veal Chops

Veal chops with grapes

17½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 veal chops, 175g / 6oz each

SAUCE

5ml / 1tsp cornflour
75ml / 3fl oz dry white wine
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream
100g / 4oz bunch of green grapes, halved and seeded
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Lay the chops in a shallow baking dish. With the meatiest parts to the outside. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, turning and rearranging chops halfway through cooking time. Stand for 5 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, blend cornflour with the wine and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until thick, stirring every 30 seconds. Add the soured cream and grapes. Season to taste.

3 Spoon the sauce over the chops. Microwave uncovered at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes.

Cook's notes

Soured or fresh cream add a touch of luxury to a sauce. However, when making a creamy sauce, always add the cream towards the end of cooking time. The sauce can then be heated, but make sure it doesn't actually boil; otherwise the cream may separate or curdle and spoil the effect. For special occasions, wine, sherry and brandy also add a wonderful flavour to sauces.

Piquant veal chops

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 veal loin chops, about 175g / 6oz each
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced into thin rings
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
60ml / 4tbls sweet chilli sauce
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp dried basil

SERVES 4

1 Lay chops in a shallow baking dish with the meatiest parts to the outside and arrange the pepper rings on top.

2 Mix the tomatoes, chilli sauce, sugar, salt and basil together in a bowl. Pour over the chops.

3 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, or until veal is tender, rearranging chops and stirring sauce once. Stand for 5 minutes.

Cook's notes

Sweet chilli sauce is available from most large supermarkets as well as from Chinese and Indian groceries. If you prefer slightly less spicy food reduce the quantity of chilli sauce and taste the sauce half-way through cooking; add a little extra then if liked. For extra piquancy, add a dash of hot chilli sauce or tabasco. However, use these spicy flavourings very sparingly: it is easier to add than take away.

Microwave plus food processor

The high speed, labour-saving combination of microwave and food processor cuts both preparation and cooking time to a minimum — it's a highly efficient working partnership.

A food processor takes much of the hard work out of cooking. All kinds of food preparation from repetitive chopping or slicing, to tiring kneading or beating can be done in a matter of seconds in the processor. What's more, the results are always consistent — there are no off days for the processor. Even simple chores, like slicing up vegetables, are better done in the food processor because it produces precisely cut pieces of the same size and thickness that will then cook more evenly in the microwave.

A processor can cope with jobs that require 'muscle' — kneading dough, for instance — as well as those that need a light hand, like pastry making. It is ideal for chopping, slicing and shredding vegetables, herbs, meat, fish, fruit, nuts and bread. It grates cheese, root vegetables, chocolate and fruit with ease and can swiftly blend or mix pastry, bread doughs, batters, soups, drinks and salad dressings. It can purée cooked vegetables and fruit and crush ice effortlessly.

Beware of over processing certain foods. Pastry, dough and batters become toughened and potatoes have a gluey texture if they are overworked. Like the microwave, the processor can save on washing up as most of the preparation is carried out in the work bowl.

RAY DUNS

gimix 2000
Food Processor
On

Layered pâté

Golden rules for processing food

- *Always cut food into uniform pieces small enough to fit into the feed-tube.*
- *Scrape down sides of work bowl so that all the ingredients are evenly processed.*
- *Check the texture of cream, potatoes, batters and doughs frequently to avoid overprocessing.*
- *Use the microwave to bring refrigerated foods, like eggs and butter, to room temperature before processing.*
- *Follow carefully the directions in the manufacturer's handbook.*
- *Take care when fitting or removing sharp metal discs or blades.*
- *Avoid overloading or underloading the machine and never overfill with liquid as this can damage the motor.*
- *Never use your fingers to push food down the feed tube. Always use the feed tube pusher.*
- *Do not try to make breadcrumbs from very fresh bread — the crumbs will be doughy.*
- *Check with maker's handbook before using the work bowl in microwave.*

Layered pâté

20 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this luxury pâté as a first course with melba toast.

1.4kg / 3lb duck, skinned, boned
10ml / 2tsp dried mixed herbs
125ml / 4fl oz dry red wine
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb belly of pork
350g / 12oz chicken breasts
juice of 1 orange
1 garlic clove, crushed
2-3 pitted black olives, sliced
4 thin slices of orange
120ml / 8tbls chopped parsley
parsley and tomato to garnish

SERVES 12

Chicken Casserole

1 Cut the duck into small pieces. Fit the metal chopping blade in the processor and drop the duck through the feed tube on to the blade, piece by piece until puréed. Transfer to a bowl and mix in the herbs, wine and seasoning.
2 Cut the pork and chicken into small pieces and process the same way as the duck. Transfer to a bowl and mix in the orange juice, garlic and seasoning, to taste. Cover both bowls and marinate overnight in the refrigerator.
3 Arrange the olive and orange slices in the base of a 2.3L / 4pt (21cm / 8½in) ring mould.
4 Spoon half the duck purée into the mould, taking care not to disturb the garnish. Smooth the surface and sprinkle with half the parsley. Cover with the chicken and pork purée; sprinkle with remaining parsley then add the remaining duck purée.
5 Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 20-25 minutes, or until juices run clear when pâté is pierced.
6 Cover mould with greaseproof paper and weight down. Leave to get cold, then chill for 2 hours. To serve, drain off juices, turn out and garnish.

Chicken casserole

30 mins

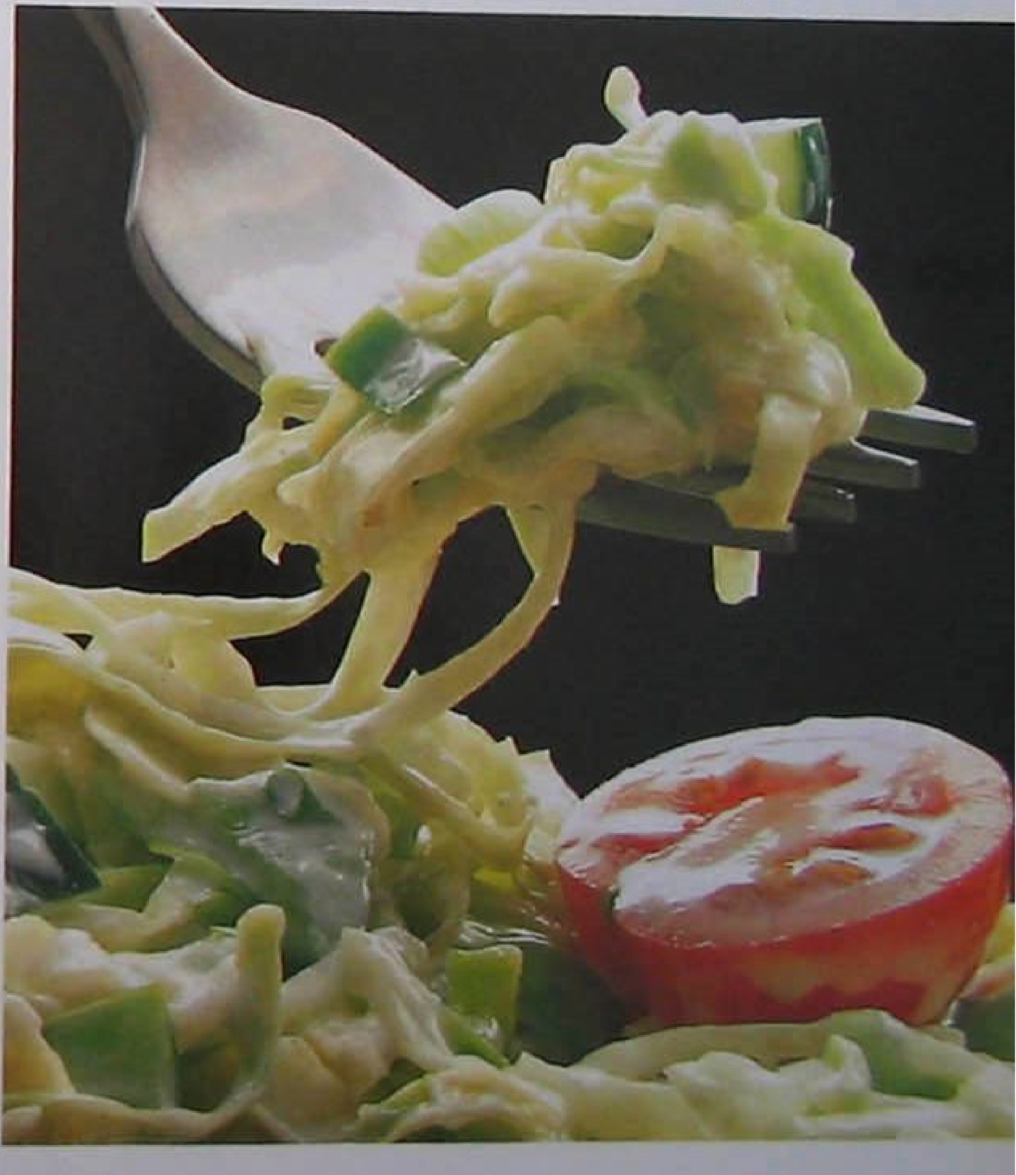
Standing time: none

2 courgettes
3 carrots
2 celery stalks
1 onion, quartered
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
4 chicken breasts (450g / 1lb total weight), skinned
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
575ml / 1pt chicken stock

DUMPLINGS
100g / 4oz self-raising flour, sifted
50g / 2oz shredded suet or cooking margarine
a pinch of salt
10ml / 2tsp mixed dried herbs
45-60ml / 3-4tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Fit the slicing disc and slice the courgettes, carrots and celery. Quarter the onion and slice.
2 Transfer the vegetables to a casserole and stir in the oil. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7 minutes until soft. Stir once.
3 Cut the chicken by hand into bite-sized pieces and add to the casserole. Cook, covered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 7 minutes, stirring once. Blend in the flour. Add the Worcestershire sauce to the stock and gradually stir into the casserole. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, until slightly thickened.
4 Meanwhile, prepare the dumplings: fit the metal chopping blade and place the flour, suet, salt and herbs in the processor bowl. Process for 3-4 seconds. Add water gradually through the tube and process until the mixture forms a soft dough around the blade.
5 Divide dough into eight equal-sized portions and form into eight dumplings. Arrange on top of the casserole. Microwave, uncovered, for 6-9 minutes at 100% (High) until dumplings are firm.



Cabbage and Pepper Slaw

Cabbage and pepper slaw

3/4 min

Standing time: none

A slaw of crunchy green vegetables marinated in a creamy dressing.

450g / 1lb white cabbage
1 small green pepper
½ small cucumber
2 celery stalks
2 green dessert apples

15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
6 spring onions
90ml / 6tbls mayonnaise
250ml / ½pt natural yoghurt
salt and pepper
2 tomatoes, halved to garnish

SERVES 6-8

1 Prepare the vegetables for processing: trim cabbage and discard the core. Cut into suitable size chunks for the feeding tube. Cut green pepper in half lengthways and remove the seeds and white membrane. Cut cucumber lengthways into quarters. Chop the celery stalks in half. Fit the slicing disc and slice these vegetables. Place in a large salad bowl.

2 Cut apples into quarters. Fit the grating disc, then grate the apple quarters. Sprinkle immediately with lemon juice and mix well. Chop the spring onions by hand. Add apples and onions to other vegetables.

3 Combine the mayonnaise and yoghurt with the salt and pepper in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 45 seconds. Pour over prepared vegetables and mix well to coat. Cover and chill for 1-2 hours. Serve, garnished with tomatoes.

Slimmer's notes

Make the dressing using low-calorie mayonnaise and yoghurt. This gives 120 Cal / 505 kJ for each portion of the slaw.

Cream of Asparagus Soup

DAVE KING

Cream of asparagus soup

24 mins

Standing time: none

This creamy soup combines the delicate flavours of asparagus and chicken.

2 celery stalks
1 onion
25g / 1oz butter
450g / 1lb asparagus spears
60ml / 4tbls water
275g / 10¾oz can condensed cream of chicken soup
275ml / ½pt single cream
150ml / ¼pt milk
2.5ml / ½tsp curry powder (optional)

SERVES 4-6

How to microwave Cream of asparagus soup

Cut *celery into 5cm / 2in lengths. Quarter the onion. Fit metal chopping blade and chop both finely. Microwave with butter at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, until tender; stir once. Cut asparagus in thirds, then chop finely.*

Add *the finely chopped asparagus and the water to the softened vegetables and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 8-12 minutes, stirring once. Fit the metal chopping blade and process the vegetables until smooth.*

Combine *the remaining ingredients in a clean casserole and add the puréed vegetables. Stir thoroughly to mix. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 11-16 minutes, until hot; stir every 3 minutes.*

Buffet salad

¾ min

Standing time: none

A warm, spicy dressing turns simple ingredients into an exotic buffet salad.

1 large crisp lettuce
1 onion
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese
6 radishes
12 black olives, stoned and sliced

DRESSING
6 drops hot pepper sauce
large pinch ground cumin (optional)
275ml / ½pt soured cream

SERVES 10-12

1 Cut the lettuce into suitable size chunks for the feed tube. Fit the slicing disc and slice. Remove from processor bowl and set aside. Fit the metal chopping blade. Quarter the onion and chop finely. Remove from processor bowl. Fit the grating disc. Cut cheese into chunks and grate. Remove cheese from processor bowl and set aside.
2 Slice the radishes by hand, then arrange the lettuce and onion on a large round serving platter. Sprinkle the grated cheese over the top with the radishes and sliced olives.
3 Mix the hot pepper sauce and cumin with the soured cream in a small bowl. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 45 seconds. Stir the dressing well and place in a dish near the salad, so your guests can help themselves.

Nutty syrup tart

13 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

A rich, buttery pastry with a sticky nutty filling — this tart is delicious served warm or cold with whipped double cream.

175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz butter, diced
10-15ml / 2-3tsp cold water

Nutty Syrup Tart

FILLING
275g / 10oz golden syrup
75g / 3oz demerara sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2 eggs
25g / 1oz butter
few drops of vanilla flavouring
175g / 6oz walnut pieces or coarsely chopped pecans

SERVES 6

1 Using the metal chopping blade, process the flour, salt and butter for 5-10 seconds, or until resembling fine breadcrumbs. Add the water slowly through the feed tube and process until the pastry forms a ball around the blade.
2 Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. Wrap the pastry dough in cling film and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
3 Roll out the dough and use to line a 23cm / 9in flan dish. Pinch the edges to neaten. Prick the base and sides with a fork. Cover the base with a double layer of absorbent paper.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the pastry is dry on the surface, rotating the dish a quarter turn every minute. Set aside.
5 Microwave the syrup and sugar for the tart filling in a small bowl at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Cool slightly.
6 Using the metal chopping blade, process the flour with eggs for 6-8 seconds. Then gradually pour the syrup mixture down the feed tube until blended with the flour mixture. Add the butter and vanilla and process until smooth.
7 Sprinkle half the walnuts over the base of the pastry case. Pour in the syrup mixture and sprinke with the remaining nuts. Microwave, uncovered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 7-9 minutes, or until the centre is almost cooked, rotating the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. If serving tart hot, stand for 10 minutes.

STAR RECIPE

Glacé fruit ring

Here is a deliciously rich fruit cake, that's cooked in under 10 minutes. It's simple to make, microwave-style, and when decorated with creamy icing and glacé cherries is wonderfully festive.

This luscious and unusual fruit cake is made with a tempting mixture of glacé and dried fruits to produce a wonderfully moist textured cake with a really festive flavour. Choose a colourful combination of glacé and dried fruit. Pineapple, crystallized ginger, glacé cherries and a little angelica for extra flavour make a good mixture from the glacé fruits range, plus a selection of dried fruits like sultanas, mixed peel, dates and dried apricots. The fruit can be varied, provided you keep to the same total quantity.

The inclusion of 30ml / 2tbls mincemeat*, adds spiciness and also helps keep the cake moist. The iced and decorated cake keeps well for up to two weeks in an airtight container; if your kitchen is warm, store the cake in the refrigerator.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use fruitmince.

Glacé fruit ring

8½ mins

Standing time: 20 mins

175g / 6oz mixed glacé fruit, chopped, rinsed in boiling water, drained and patted dry
200g / 7oz mixed dried fruits, chopped where necessary
30ml / 2tbls brandy
30ml / 2tbls sweet sherry
150g / 5oz butter or margarine, softened
65g / 2½oz soft light brown sugar
65g / 2½oz caster sugar
95g / 3½oz self-raising flour, sifted
3 large eggs, beaten
50g / 2oz chopped mixed nuts
30ml / 2tbls mincemeat*
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice

SERVES 12

Microtips

It is important to rotate the cake frequently during cooking (see step 4) to ensure the mixture rises and cooks evenly.

Soured cream icing

100g / 4oz icing sugar
30ml / 2tbls soured cream

Sift the icing sugar into a bowl, add the soured cream and mix with a fork to make a smooth, fairly soft icing.

Cook's notes

For a festive decoration quarter five glacé cherries (using an assortment of colours). Arrange on the iced cake while the icing is still moist and leave icing to set before serving. Alternatively, roll 8-10 red and green glacé cherries (with their syrupy coating) in caster sugar until evenly coated with a sparkling white frosting and arrange on the iced cake.

How to microwave Glacé fruit ring

Put *the glacé and dried fruit in a bowl. Stir in the brandy and sherry; cover with cling film and leave the mixture to stand for at least 3 hours, stirring twice.*

Put *the softened butter in a bowl, add the sugars and mix lightly with a wooden spoon. Add the sifted flour, beaten eggs, soaked fruit mixture, nuts, mincemeat and lemon juice.*

Mix *well with a wooden spoon, stirring rather than beating the mixture, until blended. Well grease a 1L / 2½pt microwave kugelhopf ring mould. Turn into mould; level surface.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 8½-9½ minutes, giving a half turn after 2 minutes, then after each minute, until surface of cake is soft but dry and cake is shrinking away from sides of mould.*

Leave *the cake to stand in the mould for 20 minutes, then turn out on to absorbent paper on a cooling rack and leave to cool completely. Cover loosely with cling film to prevent drying out.*

Prepare *the Soured Cream Icing (see left); spoon over cake, allowing some icing to trickle down the sides. Decorate the top of the cake with cherries (see Cook's notes, left).*

Continental breads 1

The microwave is marvellous for bread-making. Use it to rise and prove dough in double-quick time — leaving you free to explore a whole range of delicious Continental breads and rolls.

Because of the time needed to make bread from scratch, very few people do so regularly, and even fewer venture to make more unusual, Continental breads. But with the marvellous microwave rising and proving times are considerably shortened.

In some cases, such as for bagels, results are better if the proved dough is baked conventionally. The real advantage is the time saved in rising and proving. The method for proving bagels is unusual — it is done in a bowl of slightly sweetened water. This works superbly in the microwave and gives the bagels their characteristic, slightly sweet crust.

Care should be taken when rising or proving by microwave that the yeast is not killed by overheating. To avoid this, only give short bursts of microwave energy, and allow 15 minutes for the dough to rise and cool.

As microwaved breads do not brown during cooking, mixtures using darker flours or with syrup or eggs give a browner, more appetizing result. Similarly, a coating of wheatgerm, bran, poppy seeds or crushed grains makes a more attractive crust.

Microwave breads are very moist and springy in texture when

Crumb-Coated Rye Rolls and Swedish Rye Bread freshly cooked, but tend to dry faster than conventionally baked ones. Store the cooled bread or rolls closely wrapped in cling film or in a sealed polythene bag — this way they can be kept for one or two days. To refresh rolls or slices, see the chart below.

Cook's notes

A new variety of dried yeast is increasingly available. Unlike conventional dried yeast, it is mixed directly with the dry ingredients and not reconstituted in liquid first. If using this new easy blend yeast, follow the manufacturer's instructions, then rise and prove the dough as in the recipe.

Rich bread dough

13½ mins

Standing time: none

This standard bread dough can be used for making plain loaves or bread rolls. Add dried fruit or spices to this mixture for more unusual bakes.

15ml / 3tsp dried yeast
45ml / 3tbls warm water
35ml / 7tsp caster sugar
125ml / 4fl oz milk
50g / 2oz lard or cooking margarine
1 egg, beaten
5ml / 1tsp salt
350g / 12oz strong plain flour

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Sprinkle the yeast over the water and add 5ml / 1tsp of the sugar.

2 Place the milk and lard in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the lard has melted, stirring after 1 minute. Cool slightly. Mix in the yeast mixture and wait for about 15 minutes for the mixture to become frothy.

3 Mix the remaining sugar into the liquid mixture with the egg and salt. Gradually add the flour and mix to a soft dough. Knead on a well-floured surface until smooth and elastic.

4 Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl. Cover with greaseproof paper or vented cling film and microwave at 10% (Warm) for 4 minutes. Stand for 15 minutes. Repeat the process until the dough is doubled in size.

5 Punch down the dough with your knuckles and use as directed.

Crumb-coated rye rolls

48 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

The Swedish rye bread dough used for these rolls can also be cooked in a more conventional loaf shape, more suited to slicing for canapés or cocktail sticks.

1 quantity Swedish rye bread dough (page 982)
45ml / 3tbls dry brown breadcrumbs
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, melted

MAKES 24 ROLLS

1 Punch down the dough and knead on a lightly floured surface. Divide into 24 equal pieces and shape into balls. Mix the crumbs and herbs on a plate.

2 Lightly grease two shallow 25cm / 10in pie dishes. Brush the balls with melted butter and roll in the herbed crumbs. Arrange 12 rolls on each plate, nine around the edge and three in the middle. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Rise the rolls, one dish at a time, by microwaving as for Rich Bread Dough (see recipe on left) or in a warm place for about 1 hour, until doubled in volume.

3 Uncover and microwave, one dish at a time, at 50% (Medium) for 6-8 minutes, or until the tops of the rolls spring back when pressed lightly, giving the dish a quarter turn every 1½-2 minutes; allow the rolls to stand for 10 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool. Repeat with the second dish.

Refreshing Continental breads*

TYPE OF BREAD	QUANTITY	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Bagels, crumb-coated rye rolls	1	15 seconds
	2	30 seconds
Swedish rye bread	1 slice	10 seconds
	2 slices	20 seconds

*Place rolls or slices between absorbent paper. Microwave as above.

Swedish rye bread

32½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is a sweet bread with a soft, moist texture. Serve it thickly sliced with plenty of butter.

100g / 4oz rye flour
125ml / 4fl oz golden syrup
50g / 2oz lard or cooking margarine, melted
5ml / 1tsp salt
15ml / 3tsp dried yeast
225ml / 8fl oz warm water
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar
75g / 3oz raisins (optional)
350g / 12oz strong plain flour
wheatgerm or cornmeal
milk for brushing

MAKES 1 LARGE LOAF

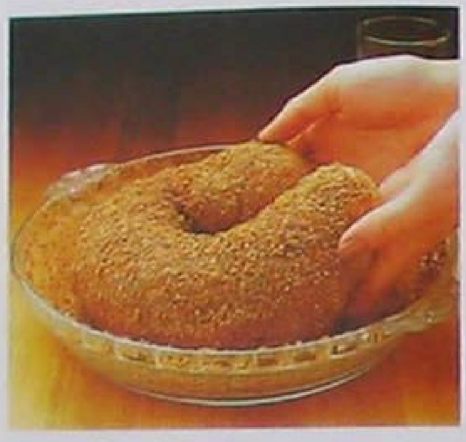
Microtips

When rising bread dough in the microwave, lightly flour the top of the dough before covering with greaseproof paper or cling film. This will prevent it from sticking to the paper and puckering up as it rises. Re-flour for each rising if necessary.

How to microwave Swedish rye bread

Combine *the rye flour, syrup, lard and salt in a large bowl. Sprinkle the dried yeast over the warm water in a small jug. Stir in the sugar and leave in a warm place for about 15 minutes or until frothy. Stir the yeast mixture and raisins into the rye flour. Gradually add the strong plain flour to form a very stiff dough.*

Knead *the dough on a lightly floured surface for about 8 minutes, or until smooth. Place in a greased bowl and either rise by microwave (see the recipe for Rich Bread Dough page 981), or leave in a warm place for 1-2 hours. Punch down the dough and shape into a ball. Cover and leave to rest for 10 minutes.*



Sprinkle *a well-greased shallow 23cm / 9in pie dish with some of the wheatgerm or cornmeal. Shape the dough into a 38cm / 15in sausage and brush all over with milk. Coat the dough with the remaining wheatgerm or cornmeal and shape into a ring. Place in the prepared dish and pinch the ends together firmly.*

Place *a greased glass, open end up, in the centre of the ring. Cover the whole dish and prove in the microwave (see Rich Bread Dough, page 981) or leave to rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours. The shaped loaf is ready to microwave when it has almost doubled in size — leave a little longer if it has not risen enough.*

Uncover *the loaf and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 2½-6 minutes, giving dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Test loaf after minimum time (see right); microwave a little longer if necessary.*

Test *the loaf by pressing the surface lightly in several places. If it is cooked, the bread will spring back when pressed. Remove from the cooker and leave to stand for 10 minutes, then carefully remove the bread from the dish and leave to cool on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.*

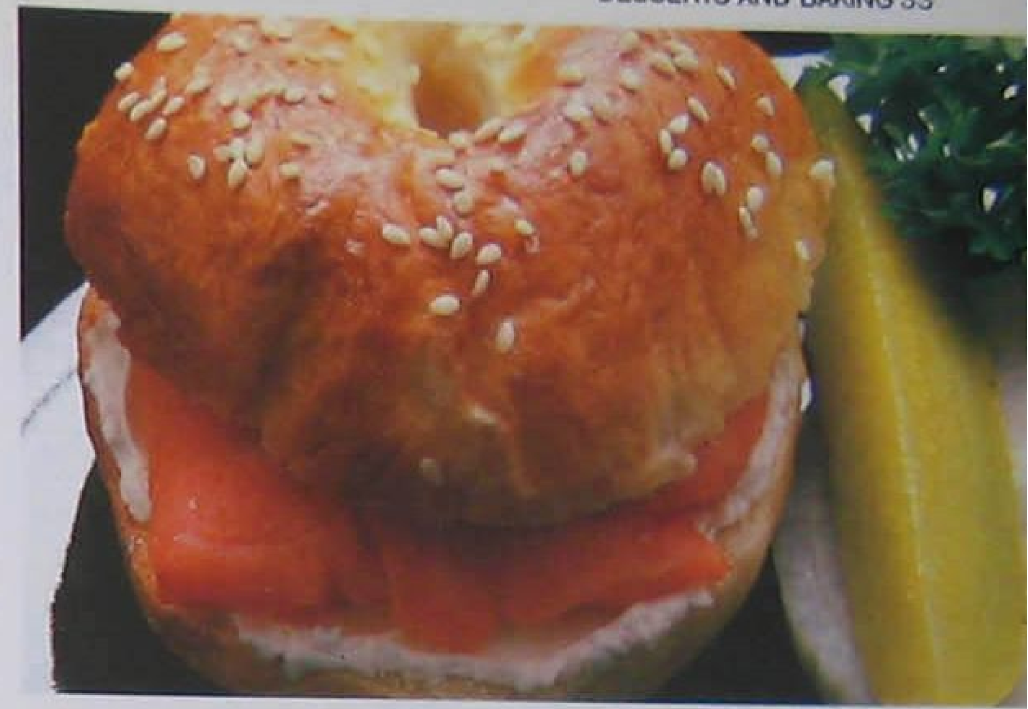
Bagels

24½ mins

Conventional cooking time: 30 mins

Standing time: none

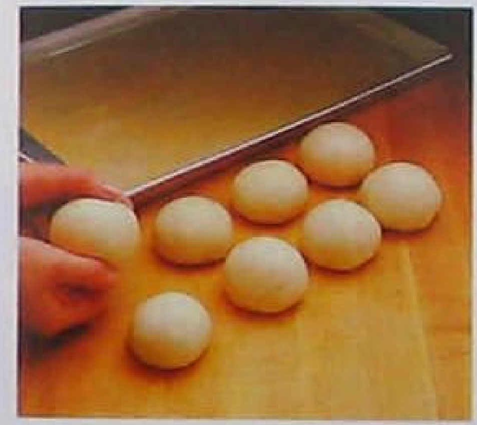
These rolls are a Jewish-American tradition; the slightly sweet crust contrasts with a filling of smoked salmon and cream cheese.



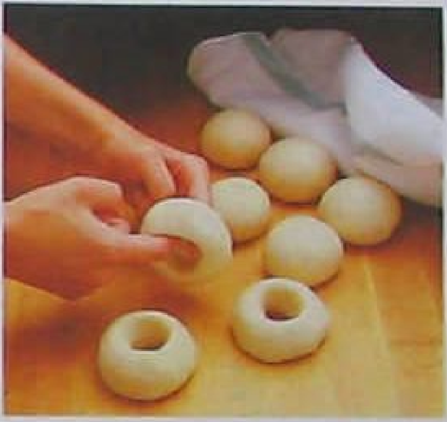
1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see page 981)
15ml / 1tbls cornmeal
1.1L / 2pt hot water
15ml / 1tbls sugar
1 egg white
15ml / 1tbls cold water
10ml / 2tsp sesame seeds

MAKES 8

How to microwave Bagels



Grease *a baking sheet and sprinkle with cornmeal; set aside. Divide the dough into eight and shape into equal balls. Set aside to rest for 15 minutes.*



Make *a hole in the centre of each ball using the index finger. Work the finger around the sides of the dough to widen the hole.*

Place *the hot water and sugar in a 3.4L / 6pt bowl. Mix well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until boiling.*

Drop *bagels into water and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Quarter turn the dish after 1 minute. Re-open holes with spoon handle.*

Turn *the bagels over and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until firm to the touch. Preheat oven to 200°C / 400°F / Gas 6. Drain bagels.*

Brush *with egg white and cold water. Sprinkle with sesame seeds on tray. Bake 10 minutes, reduce to 170°C / 325°F / Gas 3 for 10 minutes.*

Posh potatoes to freeze

Potato dishes need not take hours to assemble — a little advance preparation, freezing and then thawing in the microwave makes potato snacks and party recipes a real delight for everyone.

Potato dishes are particularly useful for freezing. They can be time consuming and fiddly to prepare, but if made in advance and frozen, they just need to be popped in the microwave and are then ready to eat in a matter of minutes.

Potato rosettes for a buffet, fancy flavoured croquettes for a dinner party or potato gnocchi dishes for family and friends are all successfully reheated from frozen in the microwave.

Preparing potato dishes

All these dishes use mashed potato so choose floury potato varieties which mash well.

When microwaving potatoes, make sure they are one size, or cut into equal pieces for quick even cooking. The amount of milk needed to make a creamy mash depends on the variety of potato, so add the minimum to start. Use a potato masher to cream the potatoes free of lumps, or an electric mixer for really smooth results.

Freezing

Open-freeze the assembled dishes for 3-4 hours or until firm. Pack in polythene bags or rigid containers for extra protection. Remember that highly seasoned dishes should not be frozen for too long.

Thawing

Thaw and heat the potato dishes straight from frozen. A heated browning dish or microwave crisper griddle helps to colour croquettes, but if you do not have one, microwave on a plate. Take care not to over-microwave the frozen croquettes, otherwise steam from the inside may cause the outer coating to crack or burst.

Potato croquettes

22 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and heating time: 14 mins

1.8kg / 4lb potatoes, cut into even-sized pieces
150ml / ¼pt hot water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
2 large eggs, beaten
salt
pepper

MAKES 3 BATCHES

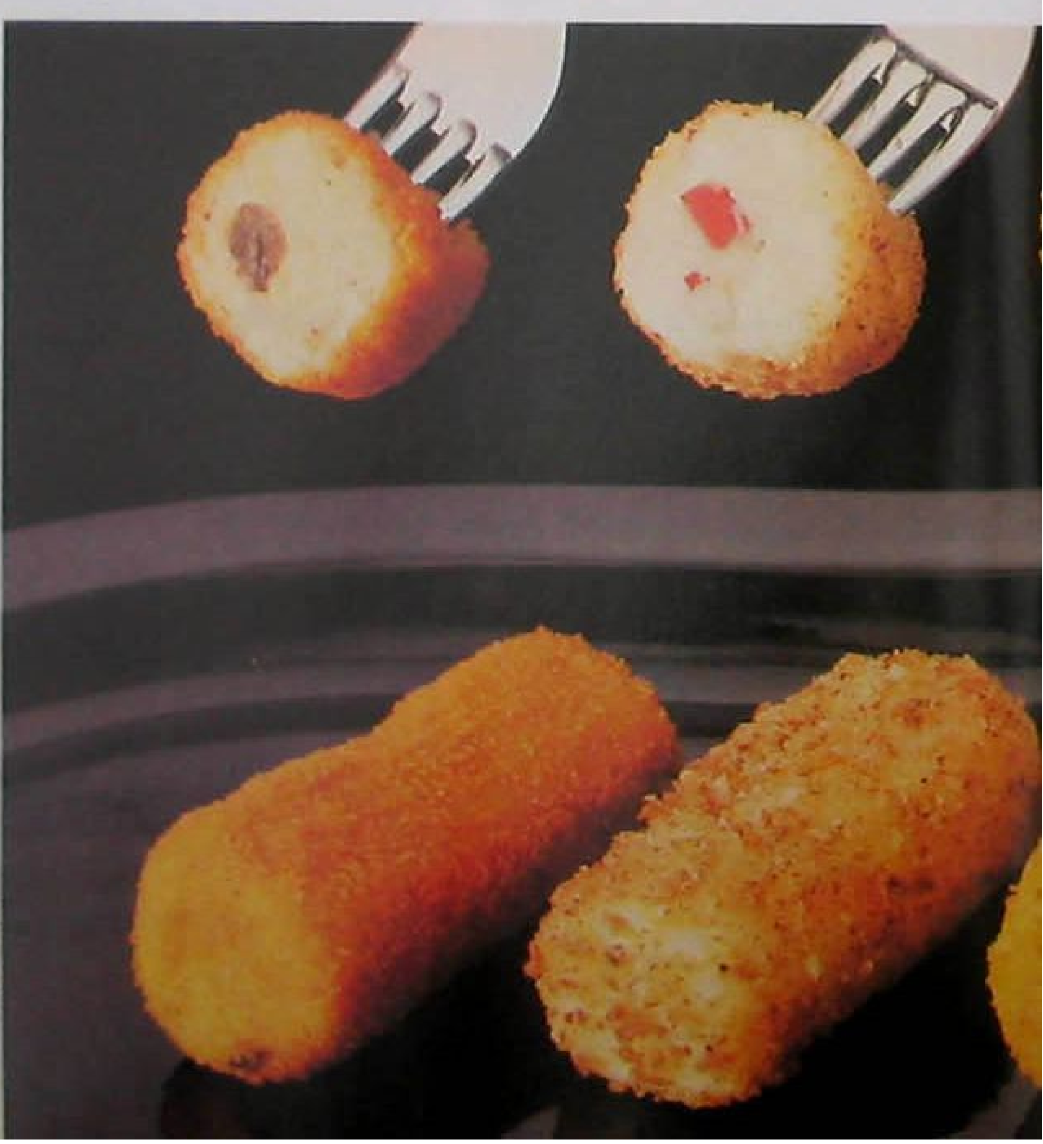
1 Place the potatoes in the hot water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 22-25 minutes until tender; stir twice. Drain thoroughly.

2 Mash the potatoes with butter. Beat in the eggs, salt and pepper. Divide into three equal portions — and use as directed in the recipes.

3 To freeze the croquettes, arrange on a tray lined with freezer paper. Open-freeze for 4-5 hours. Pack into three containers, label and freeze.

To serve

Unwrap one container and brush croquettes with oil. Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Arrange frozen croquettes around edge, turning them to brown. Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes to heat; rearrange three times.



DAVE KING

From left to right: *Curry Croquettes, Cheesy Croquettes, Golden Croquettes and Herbed Croquettes.*

Golden croquettes

22 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 14 mins

Once the basic Potato Croquette mixture had been cooked and divided into three, make up each portion into Golden, Cheesy, Herbed or Curry Croquettes. Freeze, thaw and heat the croquettes as directed in Potato Croquettes.

plain flour, sifted
1 quantity Potato Croquettes (see recipe, left)
1 small egg, beaten
few drops of oil
120ml / 8tbls golden or brown breadcrumbs (see Microtips)
about 90ml / 6tbls oil, for frying

MAKES 8 CROQUETTES

1 On a floured surface, shape one portion of basic Potato Croquette mix into eight equal rolls, about 7.5cm / 3in long and 2.5cm / 1in diameter.
2 Beat the egg with the oil and use to brush evenly over the croquettes. Then roll each croquette carefully in breadcrumbs, shaking off any loose crumbs.
3 To freeze: open-freeze, pack and freeze as directed for Potato Croquettes, opposite, for no longer than two months.
4 To serve: thaw and heat as directed opposite.

Cook's notes

When shaping and coating the croquettes, set the egg, crumbs and tray for freezing in order on the table. Use a shallow dish for the egg and absorbent paper for crumbs. Then just dip the shaped croquettes in the dishes, along the line.

If serving the croquettes as soon as they are assembled, chill thoroughly in the refrigerator — or freezer if in a hurry — after coating and before microwaving. This helps retain their shape.

Microtips

To make brown breadcrumbs, use 50g / 2oz wholemeal bread. Process or crumb the bread, (including crust) and spread out on absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% ((High) for 5-7 minutes until completely dry, stirring two or three times. Cool, then store in an airtight container for no longer than six weeks.

Cheesy croquettes

22 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 14 mins

50g / 2oz grated Cheddar cheese
½ red pepper, seeded, chopped
1.5ml / ¾tsp mustard powder
1 quantity Potato Croquettes (see opposite)

COATING
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
120ml / 8tbls golden or brown breadcrumbs (see Microtips)
plain flour, sifted
1 small egg, beaten
few drops of oil

MAKES 8-10 CROQUETTES

1 Add the cheese, red pepper and mustard powder to basic croquette mix. Shape into 8-10 croquettes.
2 Mix the Parmesan into the crumbs and coat the croquettes as for Golden Croquettes, left.
3 Freeze as directed for Potato Croquettes, up to 4 weeks.
4 To serve: thaw and heat as directed opposite.

Herbed croquettes

22 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 14 mins

10ml / 2tsp dried mixed herbs
10ml / 2tsp grated onion
1 quantity Potato Croquettes (see recipe, opposite)

COATING
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
120ml / 8tbls brown crumbs

plain flour, sifted
1 small egg, beaten
few drops of oil

MAKES 8 CROQUETTES

1 Add mixed herbs and onion to the basic croquette mixture. Shape into eight croquettes.
2 Mix the parsley with the breadcrumbs and coat the croquettes as for Golden Croquettes, page 985.
3 Freeze as directed for Potato Croquettes, for up to four weeks.
4 To serve: thaw and heat as directed on page 984.

VARIATION

Curry croquettes: mix 6.5ml / 1¼tsp concentrated mild curry paste, 2.5ml / ½tsp lemon juice, 1 crushed garlic clove and 15g / ½oz chopped raisins into one portion of the basic croquette mix. Mix 2.5ml / ½tsp paprika with golden or brown breadcrumbs.

Potato gnocchi

38
mins

Standing time: none

Gnocchi can be served as a starter or as a light main meal with a tossed green salad and hot crusty bread. Freeze these gnocchi and make into the following recipes. Each batch serves four people.

1.4kg / 3lb even-sized potatoes
150ml / ¼pt hot water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz grated Parmesan cheese
225g / 8oz self-raising flour, sifted
3 egg yolks
salt and pepper
2.3L / 4pt boiling water

MAKES 3 BATCHES

Cook's notes

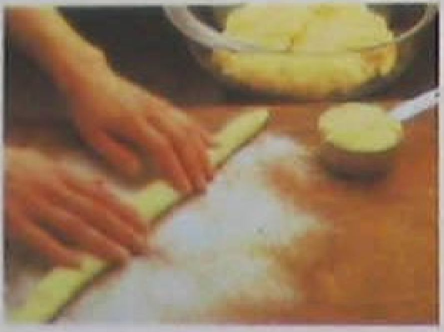
When shaping and dividing the gnocchi, sprinkle a little flour on the board. Do not use too much or the gnocchi will not be as light as they should be. The cooking water should be changed when it is cloudy with starch and flour from gnocchi, otherwise the last batch may be sticky.

Microtips

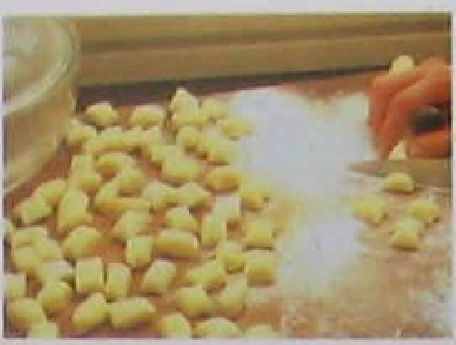
For best results, boiled potatoes should be dry and fluffy for mashing. After draining, return the potatoes to the cooker and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until excess moisture evaporates.

How to microwave and freeze Potato gnocchi

Place *the potatoes in a casserole and pour over the boiling water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 18-25 minutes until potatoes are tender, stirring twice. Drain thoroughly.*



Mash *potatoes with butter or margarine until smooth. Beat in cheese, flour, egg yolks, salt and pepper. Divide into six portions, shape one into 12mm / ½in roll.*



Cut *the roll into 2.5cm / 1in pieces. Repeat with the remaining portions. Set the pieces aside, spacing them out to prevent sticking. Pour 1.1L / 2pt boiling water into a casserole.*

To cook, *put one third of gnocchi into the boiling water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until the gnocchi rise to the surface, stirring carefully after half the time.*

Transfer *to absorbent paper to drain. Cover and microwave the water for 2-3 minutes until boiling again. Cook another third of gnocchi as before. Use fresh boiling water for last batch.*

To freeze: *arrange drained, cold gnocchi on lined trays, spacing them apart. Open-freeze for 3-4 hours. Pack in three containers, seal, label and freeze for up to one month.*

Gnocchi in tomato sauce

14 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

425g / 15oz Italian tomato sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
1 batch of frozen gnocchi
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the tomato sauce, garlic, basil and sugar into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Stir in frozen gnocchi; cover. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 9-10 minutes; stir twice.
3 Sprinkle over cheese and parsley. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-4 minutes. Stand 2-3 minutes.

VARIATION

Nutty gnocchi: microwave 25g / 1oz butter, 50g / 2oz chopped nuts and 1.5ml / ¼tsp nutmeg at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Stir in frozen gnocchi. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7-8 minutes, stir once. Sprinkle with Cheddar, and follow step 3 above.

Cheesy gnocchi

9¼ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

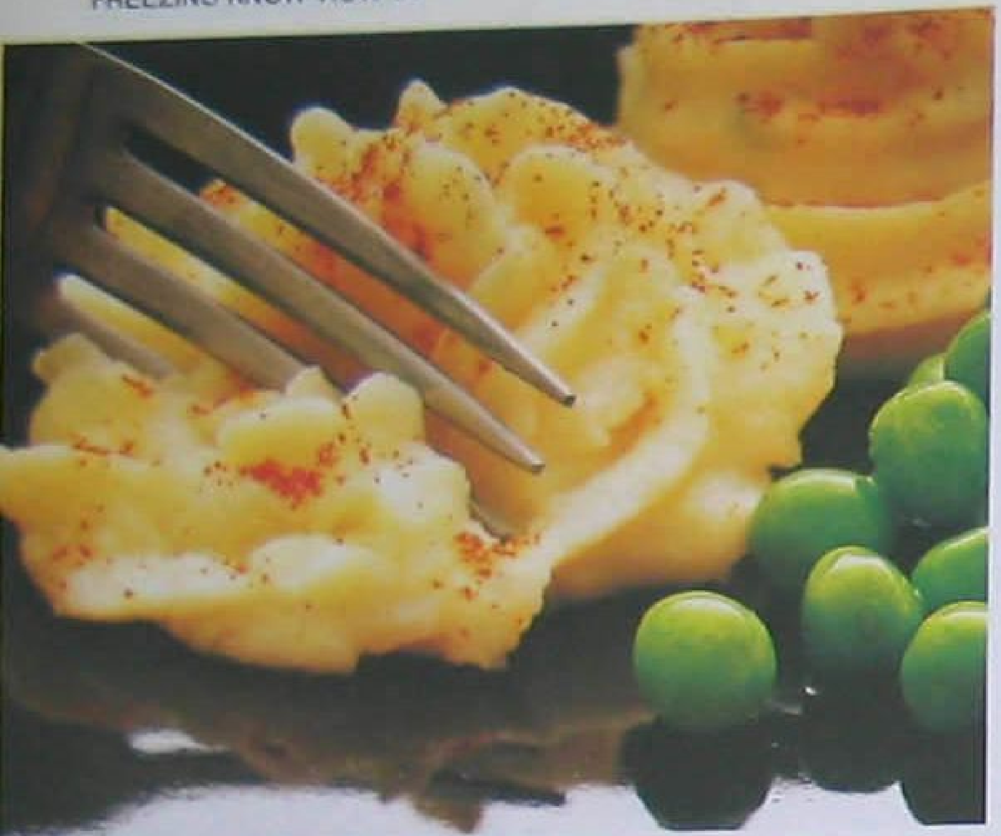
Cheese-topped gnocchi can be browned under the grill if liked.

50g / 2oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls grated Cheddar cheese
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
large pinch of onion salt
1 batch frozen gnocchi
1 carrot, coarsely grated

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix the cheeses and paprika until evenly combined.
2 Put the butter or margarine and onion salt into a shallow 23cm / 9in pie dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in frozen gnocchi and carrot. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7-8 minutes; stir.
3 Sprinkle cheese mixture over the gnocchi. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 2-3 minutes to melt cheese. Stand 2-3 minutes.

Above: *Gnocchi in Tomato Sauce*
Right: *Cheesy Gnocchi*



Potato rosettes

11 mins

Thawing and reheating: 13 mins

Standing after reheating: 2-4 mins

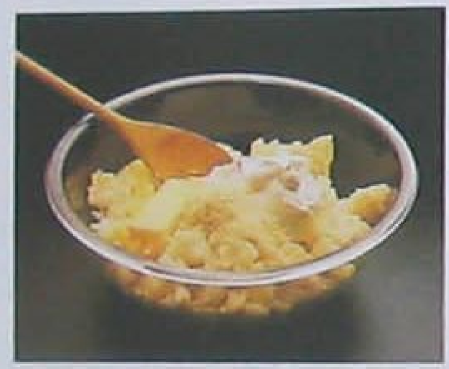
Although rosettes have a short freezer life, they are ideal for a large dinner party as all the work is done in advance. They can also enhance a family supper.

1.1kg / 2½lb potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in pieces
75ml / 3fl oz hot water
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
150ml / ¼pt milk
10ml / 2tsp snipped chives
paprika for dusting

MAKES 24-30

How to microwave Potato rosettes

Place *the potatoes in a large casserole with hot water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-15 minutes until tender, stirring twice.*

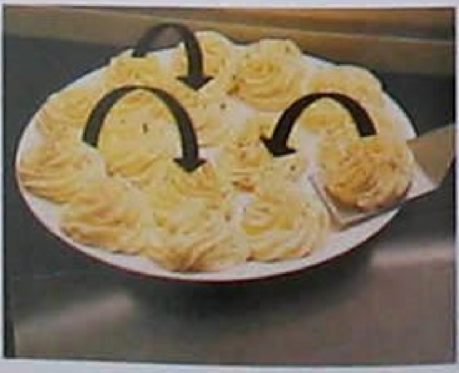


Drain *the potatoes thoroughly, add the butter or margarine, then mash until completely smooth. Beat in the cheese, salt and pepper and soured cream.*

Gradually *add enough milk to make a fairly soft mixture, beating until smooth. Stir in the chives, then spoon into a piping bag with a star nozzle.*

Pipe *5-6½cm / 2-2½in rosettes of potato mixture on to trays lined with freezer film or paper. Sprinkle with paprika and open freeze for 3-4 hours.*

Pack *in freezer containers or bags, seal and freeze for up to 1 week. To serve, microwave up to 15 rosettes at 70% (Medium-High) for 3½ minutes.*



Cover *with absorbent paper; microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes. Stand for 1-2 minutes. Rearrange and repeat as needed.*

Citrus fruit 1

For a real burst of flavour, try grapefruit, orange, lemon and lime dishes in the microwave. Nothing beats their tangy-tasting, fresh-flavoured goodness when cooked the microwave way.

Citrus fruits have strong, tangy flavours, which are highlighted when cooked in the microwave. Suitable for both sweet and savoury dishes, they are exceptionally versatile as the whole fruit — zest, juice and flesh — can be used for cooking and decorating or garnishing.

Grapefruit, oranges, lemons and limes are available all year. **Grapefruit** are often halved, baked and served hot (see recipe, page 992) for a refreshing starter or finale to a meal. They are also popular with prawns or in salads. The pink-flesh varieties are much sweeter than the common yellow type. **Oranges** and **lemons** give extra zest to all sorts of sweet and savoury dishes from cakes and sauces to fish and meat casseroles. **Limes** add an exotic touch, particularly as decoration.

Citrus fruits keep well for up to seven days at room temperature. Stored in the refrigerator, they keep for two to three weeks.

Citrus Layer Jelly

DAVE KING

Citrus layer jelly

11 mins

Standing time: none

1 lemon, thinly sliced
1 lime, thinly sliced
1 thin slice of orange
150ml / ¼pt water

LEMON JELLY
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
juice of 2 lemons
water
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
2 drops yellow food colouring

LIME JELLY
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
juice of 2 limes
water
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
2 drops green food colouring

ORANGE JELLY
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
30ml / 2tbls frozen concentrated orange juice, thawed
water
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
2 drops orange food colouring

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the slices of fruit in a bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes until the slices are tender; stir, drain and set aside.

2 To make the lemon jelly, sprinkle the gelatine over the lemon juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-40 seconds, or until the gelatine has melted. Add sufficient water to make up to 275ml / ½pt. Stir in the sugar and colouring and leave to cool. Pour about 12mm / ½in of jelly into a chilled 0.8L / 1½pt soufflé dish.

3 Cut the lime and lemon slices in half and arrange around the outside of the dish on the jelly. Place the orange slice in the centre of the jelly. Chill until almost set but slightly tacky. Pour on remaining lemon jelly and chill until tacky. Meanwhile, make the lime jelly as for the lemon, and leave at room temperature.

4 When the lemon jelly is ready, pour the lime jelly on top. Chill until almost set. Make up the orange jelly and pour over the almost set lime jelly and chill for at least 3 hours or until firmly set.

5 To serve, dip the soufflé dish in hot water for a few seconds then turn out on to a serving dish.

Microtips

If the remaining lemon jelly sets while the lemon jelly with fruit is chilling, microwave it at 100% (High) for 5 seconds or until it begins to melt.

Cook's notes

Do not allow jelly to set firm before layering with the next — the surface should be tacky otherwise layers will not join properly, sliding off when turned out. To speed up setting, place jelly in the freezer for about 20-30 minutes — no longer, or the jelly will set too hard and will 'weep' when turned out.

Orange squares

4 mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, softened
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
50ml / 2fl oz soured cream
1 egg, beaten

ORANGE ICING
grated zest of 1 orange
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
25g / 1oz butter or margarine, softened
225g / 8oz icing sugar
50g / 2oz chopped nuts

MAKES 15 SQUARES

How to select citrus fruit

Look *for fruit which is heavy for its size and moderately firm. Finely textured, thin-skinned fruit is juiciest. Grapefruit skin colour ranges from pale yellow to russet. Oranges with a greenish tinge are still sweet, but greenish lemons are more acidic. Limes with a smooth skin are sweetest; purple or brown spots on the skin of the fruit do not affect the flavour.*

Avoid *fruit with discoloured areas at the stem end, soft spots, mould or any skin punctures. A spongy or dull, dry skin indicates the fruit is past its best and should be discarded.*

1 Sift the flour, bicarbonate or soda and salt together into a mixing bowl. Stir in all the remaining sponge ingredients. Beat with an electric whisk for 1 minute or with a wooden spoon for 2 minutes. Spread in a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in baking dish.

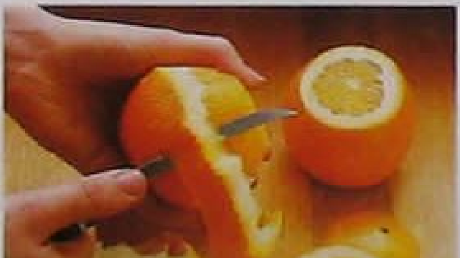
2 Place the dish on an inverted saucer. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5½ minutes, rotating a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Check through bottom of dish for doneness. No unbaked mix should appear in the centre. If using an opaque dish, insert a skewer which should come out clean. Allow to cool before turning out.

3 To make the icing, combine the orange zest and juice with the butter or margarine in a mixing bowl. Sift in the icing sugar and beat until smooth. Spread over the cake and sprinkle with the nuts. Cut into 5cm / 2in squares.

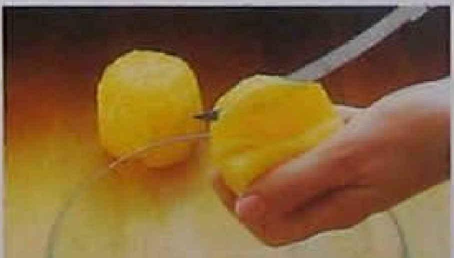
Microtips

To extract the maximum amount of juice from citrus fruit, place one or two oranges or grapefruit in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds before cutting and squeezing. Allow 45 seconds for three or four pieces of fruit, taking care not to allow the fruit to become too hot.

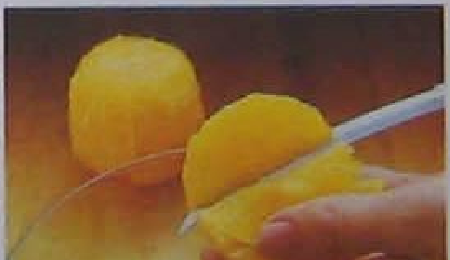
How to segment oranges and grapefruit



Slice *the ends off the fruit. Using a sawing motion, cut off the skin in a spiral, taking care to remove every scrap of bitter white pith.*



Hold *the fruit over a bowl to catch the juice. Using a sharp knife, cut to the centre between the membrane to loosen one segment.*



Twist *knife to free the segment from the central membrane. Continue until all segments are removed; squeeze juice from membrane.*

Hot 'n' spicy grapefruit

4¼ mins

Standing time: none

Serve this hot grapefruit as an appetizing starter, or as a refreshing dessert to round off a rich meal.

2 large grapefruit, cut in half
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz soft light brown sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 4

1 Remove the pips from the grapefruit. Cut around the edges and segments with a sharp knife to loosen. Place each fruit in a microwave-safe serving bowl.

2 Microwave the butter or margarine in a small, covered bowl at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the brown sugar and cinnamon, then spoon evenly over each of the grapefruit.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until thoroughly heated, rearranging the bowl and rotating a half turn once.

VARIATION

Crunchy-topped grapefruit: mix in 50g / 2oz lightly crushed wholewheat breakfast flakes with the brown sugar and ground cinnamon for added crunch.

Slimmer's notes

For a perfect slimmer's starter or dessert, use low fat spread and only 20ml / 4tsp sugar. This gives 80Cal / 335kJ per serving.

Cook's notes

If you do not have microwave-safe serving bowls for the grapefruit, or the bowls do not fit in the cooker together, just use a large, microwave-safe plate. After cooking transfer the fruit to bowls, warmed under hot water, if liked.

Hot 'n' Spicy Grapefruit

Lemon cream pie

8 mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in Biscuit Crumb Case (see Part 35, page 951)
100g / 4oz caster sugar
60ml / 4tbls cornflour*
pinch of salt
425ml / 15fl oz boiling water
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
25g / 1oz butter
grated zest of 1 lemon
juice of 2 lemons
150ml / ¼pt whipped cream

SERVES 6

1 Combine the sugar, cornflour, salt and 50ml / 2fl oz water in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Microwave the remaining water at 100% (High) 2-3 minutes until boiling.

2 Stir the boiling water into the sugar mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until very thick, stirring every minute. Mix a little of the syrup mixture into the beaten egg yolks.

3 Pour the yolk mixture into the casserole, stirring all the time. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir in butter, lemon zest and juice; cool slightly, then turn into crumb case. Chill. Top with whipped cream to serve.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 3tbls cornflour

Lemon Cream Pie

Sherried grapefruit

4½ mins

Standing time: none

3 grapefruit
150ml / ¼pt water
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp mixed spice
2.5ml / ½tsp cinnamon
60ml / 4tbls sherry

SERVES 4

1 Cut away all peel and pith from grapefruit. In a serving dish, slice grapefruit into 6mm / ¼in slices. Remove pips and white core from centre. Pour any juice into a bowl or jug. Arrange the slices in the serving dish and set aside.

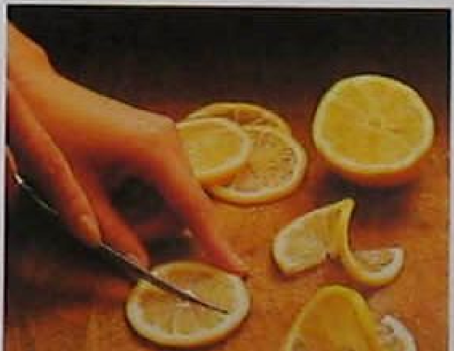
2 Add water, sugar and flavourings to the juice in the jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until sugar has dissolved, stirring once.

3 Pour over the slices and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until hot, turning the slices once. Stir in the sherry and serve warm or chilled.

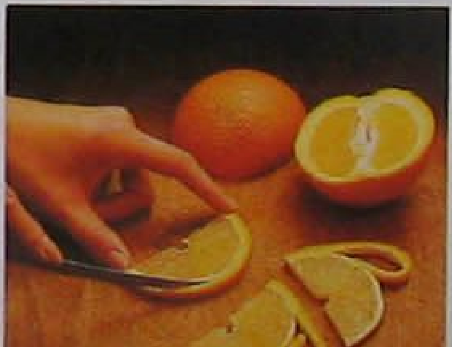
VARIATION

Sherried citrus fruit: Use two grapefruit and two oranges and prepare as above.

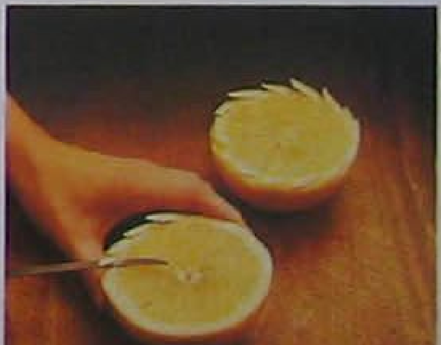
Decorative ways with citrus fruit



Twists: *thinly slice a lemon, lime or orange. Make a cut from the outside to centre of slice. Twist cut edges in opposite directions.*



Loops: *halve fruit through stem end; cut across into slices, then in half. Remove pips. Separate all but 2.5cm / 1in peel from fruit; curl under.*



Fringed fruit: *halve an orange or grapefruit. Using a sharp knife, make small diagonal cuts all around top edge of peel. Loosen segments and serve.*

Orange tartlets

8¾ mins

Standing time: none

PASTRY

25g / 1oz butter or margarine, diced
50g / 2oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
15-20ml / 3-4tsp ice cold water
2 drops yellow food colouring

FILLING

½ quantity Crème Patissière (see Part 34, page 920)

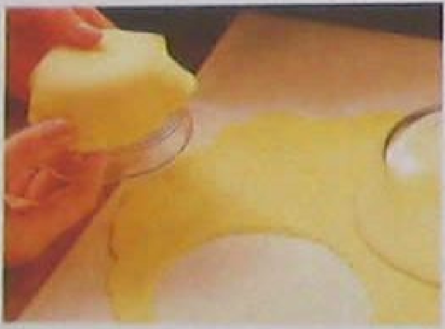
GLAZE

7.5ml / 1½tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
2 drops yellow food colouring
1 orange

SERVES 2

How to microwave Orange tartlets

Rub *the butter into the flour until resembling fine breadcrumbs. Stir in water and yellow colouring and bind mixture to make a dough.*



Roll *out on a floured surface to a thickness of 3mm / ⅛in. Cut two 11.5cm / 4½in circles. Mould each over base of an upturned ramekin.*

Prick *pastry shells all over. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until flaky; rearrange every minute. Transfer to wire rack; cool.*

Mix *the sugar, cornflour and water for the glaze in a measuring jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until clear and thickened. Stir in the colouring.*

Peel *away all the rind and pith from the orange using a sharp knife. Divide into segments, removing all the membrane (see steps, page 991). Have ready the cooled Crème patissière.*

To assemble tarts, *fill each pastry shell with half the cooled Crème patissière. Arrange orange segments on top. Spoon glaze over oranges; chill. Decorate with fresh mint.*

Lemon-herb chicken

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

juice and zest of 1 lemon
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
10ml / 2tsp dried tarragon
salt and pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
1.1-1.4kg / 2½-3lb chicken, cut into eight pieces
4 thin lemon slices, cut in half

SAUCE

juice of 1 lemon
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
large pinch of dried basil
pinch of salt
15g / ½oz butter or margarine

SERVES 4-6

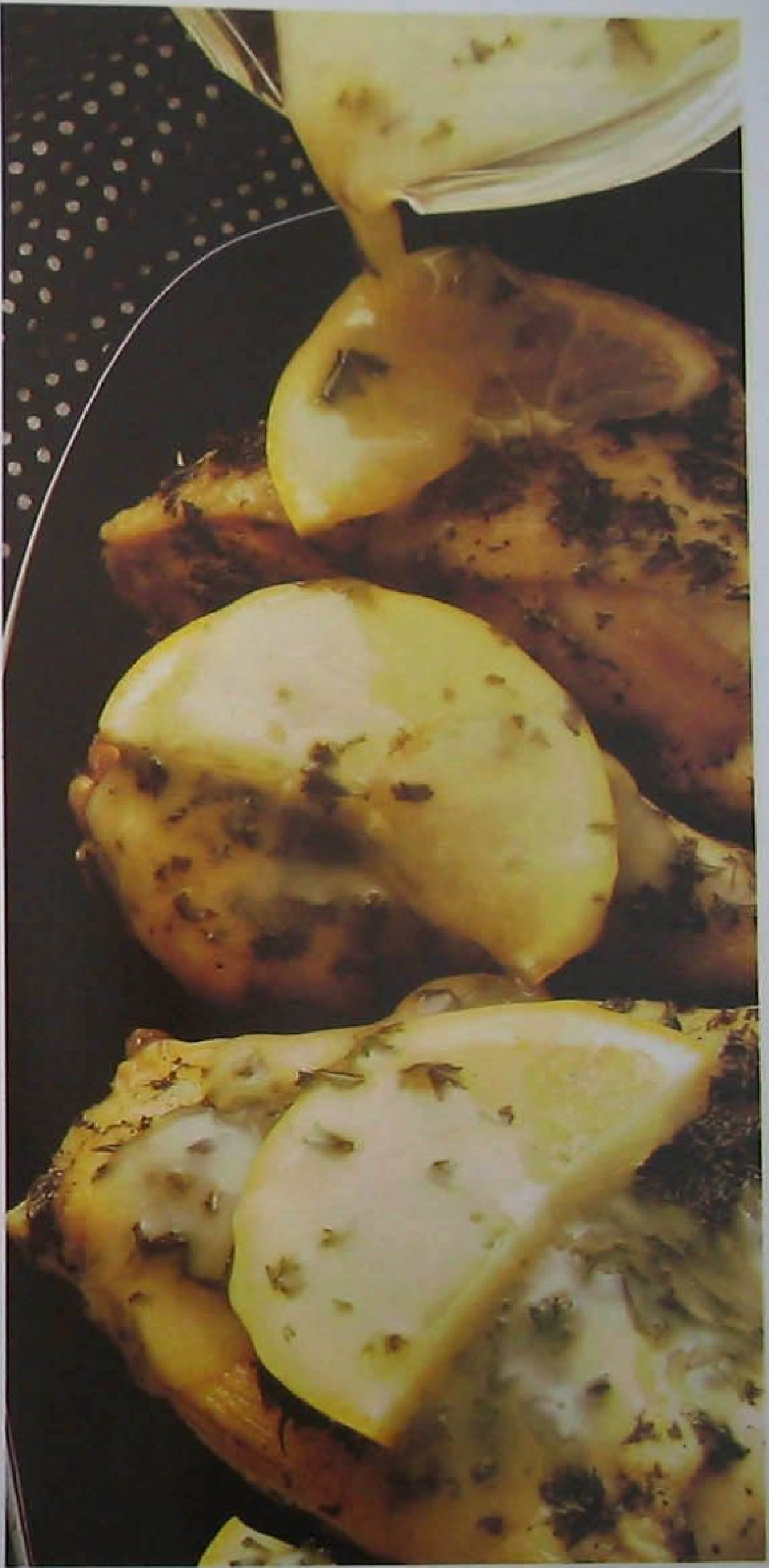
1 Mix together the lemon juice, zest and herbs. Rub the herb mixture on to the chicken.

2 Place the chicken in a baking dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, or until cooked, rearranging three or four times. Test by inserting a knife into the meat, close to the bone — juices should run clear.

3 Pour the cooking juices from the chicken into a measuring jug and reserve. Place the lemon slices on the chicken and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, prepare sauce. Add the lemon juice to reserved juices and make up to 175ml / 6fl oz with water. Blend with the remaining ingredients, except the butter.

5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-6 minutes until thickened, stirring two or three times. Season, then stir in the butter until melted. Serve the sauce over the chicken.



Lemon-herb Chicken

Slimmer's notes

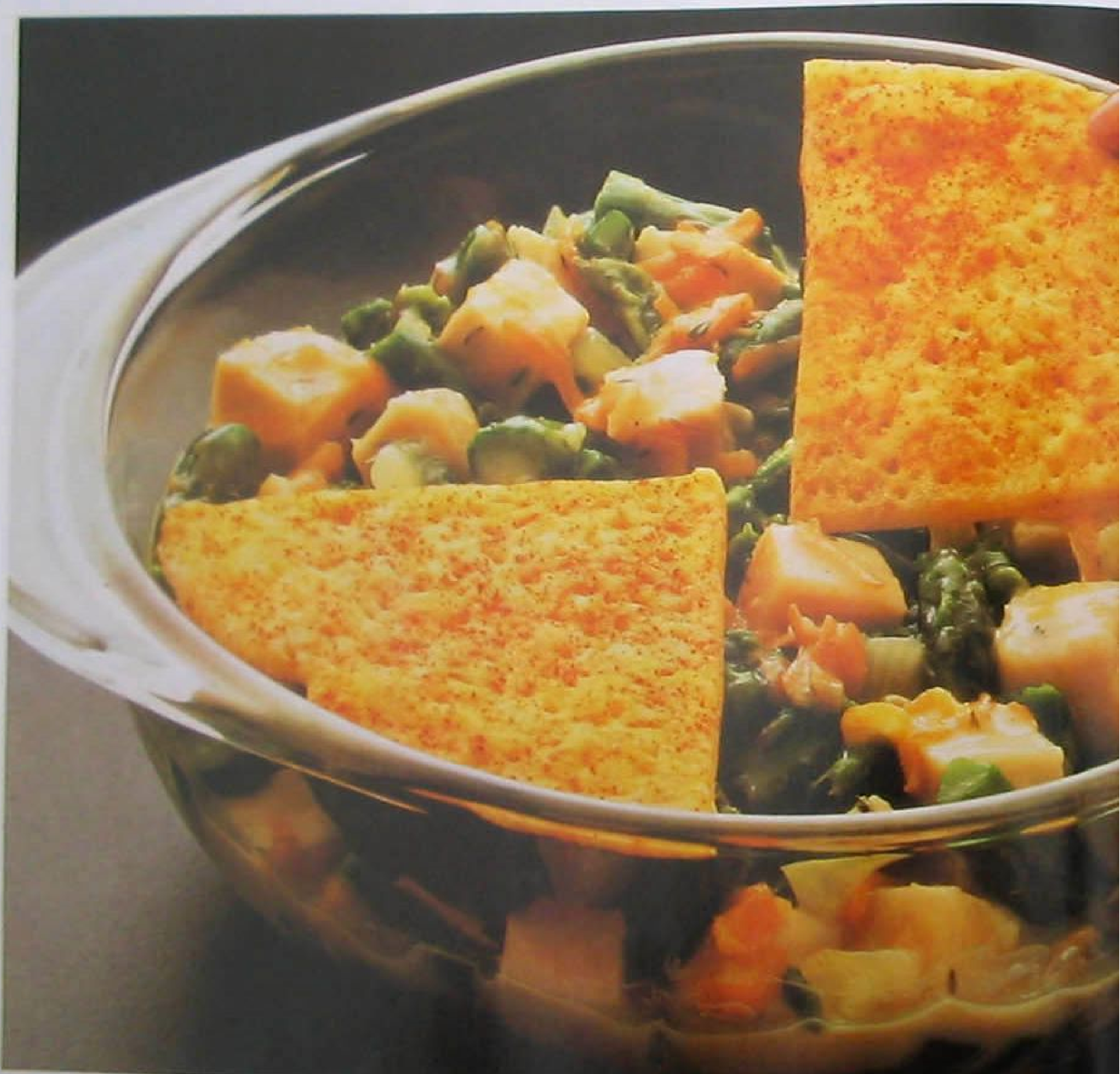
This makes a delicious slimmer's meal with a few simple adjustments. Remove the skin from the chicken pieces and omit the butter from the sauce. This gives just 225Cal / 945kJ per serving.

Lovely leftovers

If you are bored with the usual ways of using up the leftovers from the turkey or chicken, take heart — here are six tasty and unusual ideas to cook in the microwave in double-quick time.

Turkey or chicken leftovers can be disguised in numerous ways that reheat quickly in the microwave and provide some excellent and nourishing main course dishes.

Microwaving is the ideal way of reheating any previously-cooked poultry as it does the job quickly and efficiently without the meat losing flavour or colour, or the texture spoiling. To ensure that dishes reheat successfully without overcooking or drying out, the pieces of meat used should be uniform in size.



Speedy Poultry Pie

Speedy poultry pie

12½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

275g / 10oz frozen asparagus
30ml / 2tbls water
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
salt and pepper
275g / ½pt milk
1 small onion, chopped
450g / 1lb cooked turkey or chicken meat, cubed
100g / 4oz carrots, grated

PASTRY
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
salt
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
2 drops yellow food colouring
30ml / 2tbls water
paprika, for dusting

SERVES 4

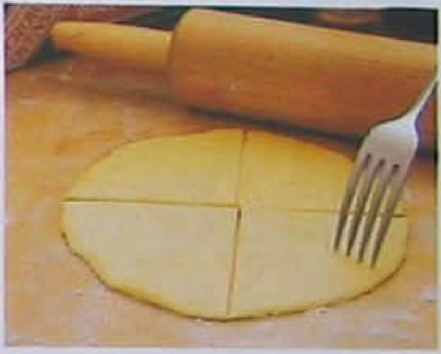
Cook's notes

The yellow food colouring may be omitted from the pastry mixture if preferred, although it does help give a better appearance to the finished dish. If omitting colouring, then dust liberally with paprika before microwaving.

How to microwave Speedy poultry pie

Place *the asparagus and water in a casserole dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, stirring after half the time to break apart. Cover and leave the asparagus to stand for 2 minutes while preparing the pastry top.*

Mix *the flour and salt together in a bowl. Rub in the butter or margarine until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix the food colouring, if using, into the water, then stir liquid into bowl and mix together lightly to a soft dough.*



Roll *out pastry on a lightly-floured surface to a 15cm / 6in circle and cut into quarters. Prick all over with a fork and place on a sheet of non-stick paper. Dust with paprika and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until pastry feels dry. Cool on wire rack.*

Combine *cornflour, crumbled stock cube and seasoning in a bowl. Whisk in the milk, then add the onion and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-4 minutes or until the mixture thickens and onion is tender, whisking sauce well every minute.*

Place *poultry meat, carrots and drained asparagus in a casserole. Stir in the sauce and mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes until hot, stirring every 2 minutes. Top with the pastry pieces and reheat for 1 minute. Serve hot.*

Dishy pies

15 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity of pastry, (see Speedy Poultry Pie on page 997)
450g / 1lb potatoes, peeled and cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
100g / 4oz carrots, chopped
1 onion, chopped
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
450g / 1lb cooked chicken or turkey meat, cubed
paprika, for dusting

SERVES 4

1 To make the pastry follow the instructions given in step 2 of Speedy Poultry Pie, page 997 and chill for 15 minutes.
2 Mix all the filling ingredients, except the chicken or turkey, together in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes or until tender.
3 Add the chicken or turkey, then stir well and divide the mixture between four individual dishes.

Dishy Pies

4 Divide the pastry into four. Roll out each piece on a lightly floured work surface and cut into 11.5cm / 4½in rounds. Prick all over with a fork, then transfer all four rounds to a sheet of greaseproof paper and sprinkle with paprika.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until pastry feels dry. Remove and place on top of casseroles. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until hot.

Turkey chow mein

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 celery stalks, sliced diagonally
1 onion, chopped
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
50g / 2oz fresh or canned beansprouts
¼ red pepper, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz water chestnuts, sliced
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
50ml / 2fl oz water
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
450g / 1lb cooked turkey meat, cubed
30ml / 2tbls crisp chow mein noodles

SERVES 4

1 Put the celery, onion, mushrooms, beansprouts, red pepper and water chestnuts in a casserole. Mix the cornflour and water to a smooth paste in a small bowl, add the crumbled stock cube and soy sauce and stir into the vegetable mixture.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once. Stir in the turkey, then recover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once. Let stand for 5 minutes. Top with chow mein noodles.

Turkey paprika

8½ mins

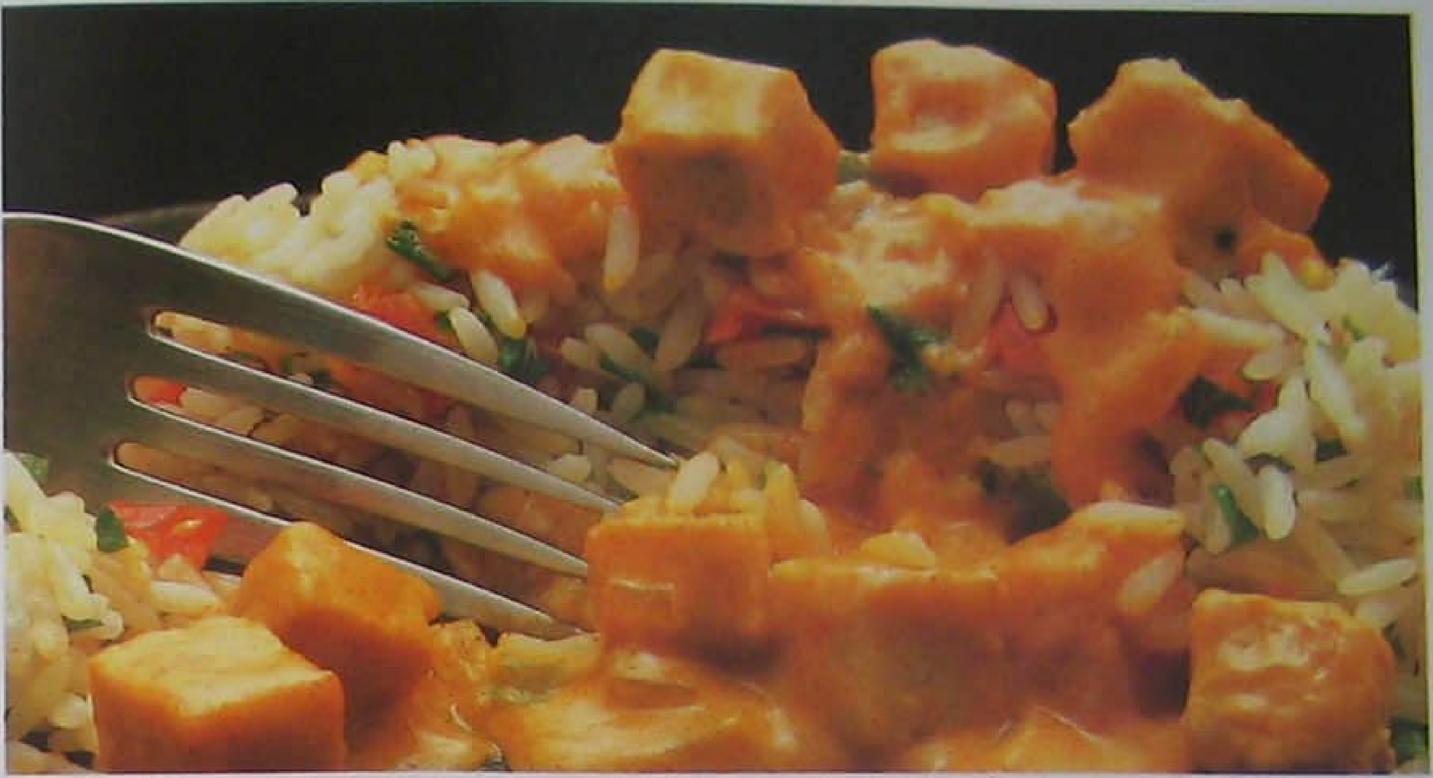
Standing time: none

450g / 1lb cooked turkey meat, cubed
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
15ml / 1tbls paprika
275ml / ½pt milk

SERVES 4

1 Combine the turkey, onion and oil in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until onion is softened and turkey is heated through.
2 Put the butter in another bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the flour, crumbled stock cube and paprika, then microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
3 Stir in the milk and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes until thickened, stirring twice during cooking. Pour sauce over the turkey mixture and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes, stirring once. Serve hot with boiled or savoury rice.

Turkey paprika for two: halve the ingredients. Microwave the turkey and onion mixture for 1½-2½ minutes; the flour and paprika for 30 seconds and the milk mixture for 1½-2 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking. Reheat the entire mixture for 1½-2½ minutes, stirring once.



Above: *Turkey Paprika*
Right: *Crafty Croûton Casserole*

Cook's notes

The Turkey Paprika mixture is equally delicious made with cooked chicken instead of turkey meat. Serve it with plain boiled rice or buttered noodles, if preferred.

Crafty croûton casserole

9 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
225ml / 8fl oz milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp Worcestershire sauce
450g / 1lb cooked turkey or chicken, cubed
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 onion, chopped
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
2 slices white bread, cut in 12mm / ½in cubes
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Put the mushrooms and 15g / ½oz of the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until softened.

2 Stir in flour and seasoning and blend in milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until thickened, stirring every 30 seconds. Add Worcestershire sauce and turkey or chicken cubes; set aside.

3 Put the remaining butter in a bowl with the celery, onion, and crumbled stock cube. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until the vegetables are softened, stirring halfway through cooking.

4 Add the bread cubes and parsley, toss well until evenly coated with the mixture and leave to soak for 2 minutes to absorb the moisture. Arrange the bread cube mixture on top of the turkey or chicken mixture, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, until heated through. Serve hot.

Crafty croûton casserole for two: halve the ingredients. Microwave mushrooms at 100% (High) for 35-45 seconds and sauce for 1-2 minutes. Microwave the vegetable and breadcrumb mixture, in step 3, for 1 minute and the topping mixture, in step 4, for 1-2 minutes.

Turkey-stuffed tomatoes

5 mins

Standing time: none

4 large tomatoes
400g / 14oz can artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
450g / 1lb cooked turkey, cubed
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese
1 garlic clove, crushed
large pinch of dried marjoram
salt and pepper
paprika, for dusting

SERVES 4

1 Cut a thin slice from the stalk end of each tomato and carefully scoop out the pulp. (This can be frozen for future use, see Freezer notes below).

2 Mix the artichokes, cubed turkey, Parmesan cheese, garlic, marjoram and seasoning together in a bowl.

3 Spoon the mixture into the tomato shells and sprinkle with paprika. Place each tomato in a small bowl or cup and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes until heated through.

VARIATIONS

Use cooked chicken instead of turkey meat and replace the artichoke hearts with canned, drained asparagus spears, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths.

Freezer notes

Freeze the leftover tomato pulp for up to 6 months, then use as required from frozen, in soups, stews and sauces.

Microtips

When microwaving casserole mixtures, stir them well during reheating to distribute the heat and shorten the reheating time. If this is not possible, because of a topping, for example, then remember to rotate the dish (or dishes) several times during microwaving.

High-speed rice

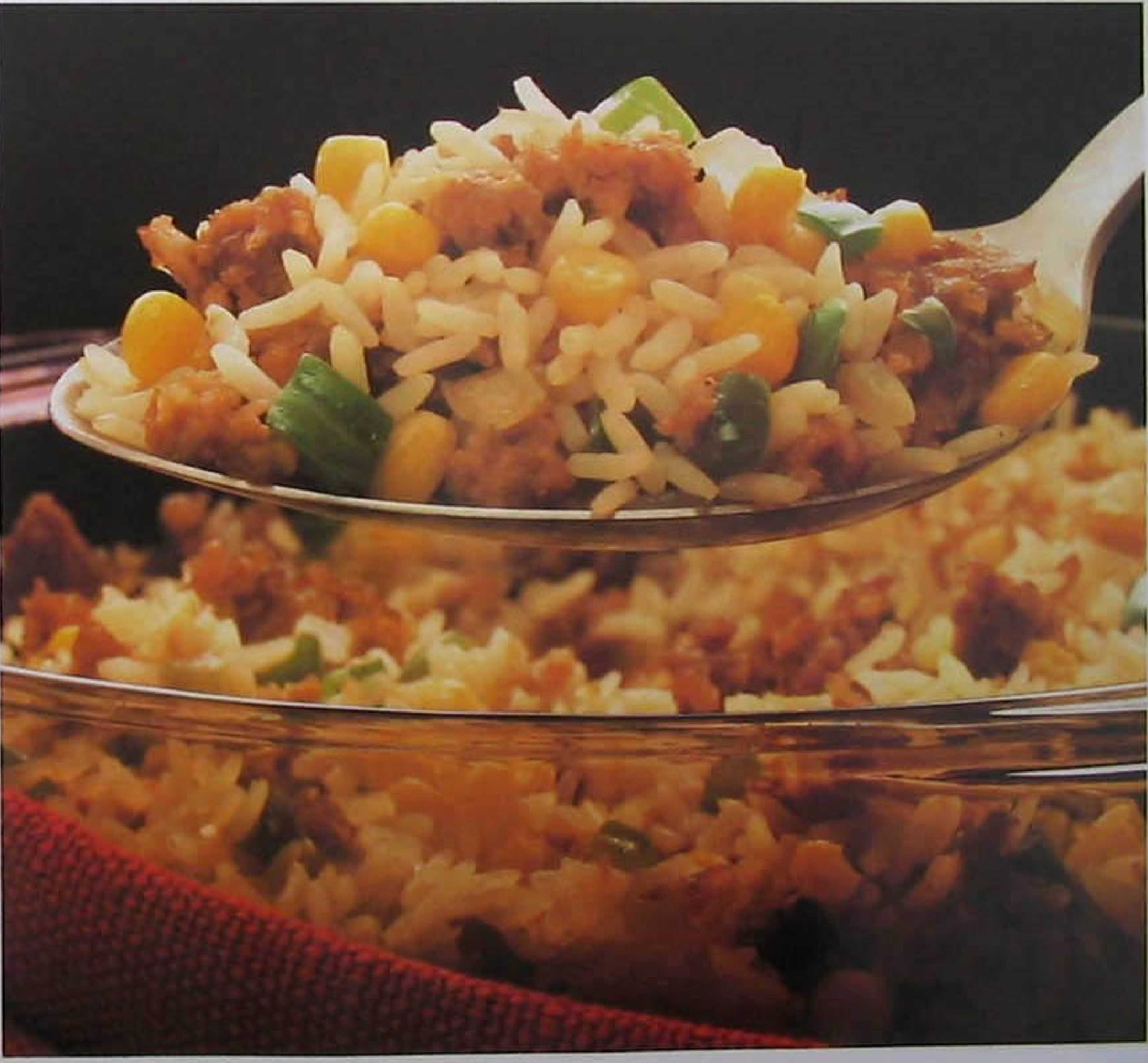
There's no doubt that rice provides a host of delicious dishes of almost endless variety. All are simple to prepare and can be cooked in the microwave in under 30 minutes.

The versatility of rice is shown to great effect in this selection of dishes — whether you choose the Sausage and Rice Casserole for a tasty family meal, or the more exotic Sweet and Sour Pork or Stuffed Green Peppers for a supper party.

The recipes given have all been tested using long-grain rice (not the quick-cook variety), so follow the timings given for successful results. In some cases, the recipes use ready-cooked, long-grain rice, which can either be cooked in the conventional manner or in the microwave, following the instructions given in the Microtips, page 1002.

Whether you choose to cook rice conventionally or by microwave you can save yourself a lot of time by cooking it in advance then reheating in the microwave when required. Just follow the instructions for reheating in the Microtips on page 1003. You will find it comes out even fluffier!

Sausage and Rice Casserole



Sausage and rice casserole

25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz long-grain rice
400ml / 14fl oz boiling water
salt and pepper
knob of butter
450g / 1lb pork sausagemeat
1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
200ml / 7fl oz chicken stock
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn, drained

SERVES 4

1 Combine the rice, boiling water, seasoning and butter in a large casserole. Cover and cook at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 12 minutes, stirring twice during cooking. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, crumble the sausagemeat into a casserole. Add the onion and pepper, then cover (see step 1 below) and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-7 minutes or until the sausagemeat is partly cooked, stirring once halfway through cooking to break up the sausagemeat into small pieces.

3 Drain off the fat and juices from casserole, then stir in cooked rice and the remaining ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-9 minutes, stirring twice (see step).

Stuffed green peppers

29 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, peeled and chopped
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls bottled tomato sauce
48g / 1¾oz packet casserole mix*
100g / 4oz long-grain rice
350g / 12fl oz boiling water
4 large green peppers

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion, garlic and oil in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in the beef, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once or twice.

2 Stir in the seasoning, tomato sauce, casserole mix, rice and boiling water. Cover and cook at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 10 minutes, or until rice is almost cooked, stirring twice.

3 Cut a slice from the stalk end of each pepper, remove seeds and place upright in a dish. Fill with rice mixture, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

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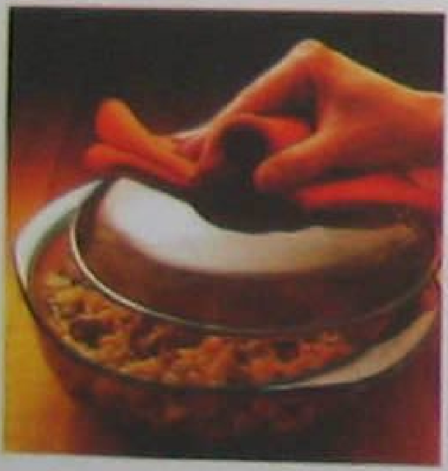
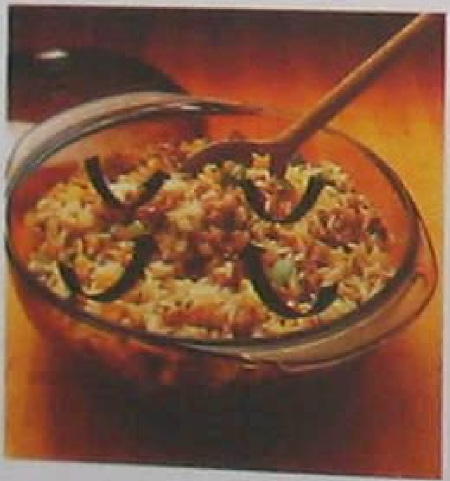
*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use hamburger seasoning.

Stuffed Green Peppers

How to microwave Sausage and rice casserole



Cover *the casserole during cooking to prevent the liquid evaporating before the mixture cooks.*



Stir *the casserole mixture twice during step 3 to ensure even cooking throughout.*

Cook's notes

Cooking rice in the microwave is, in fact, no quicker than cooking it conventionally. However, it does assure a bowl of perfectly cooked, fluffy rice every time and means less messy washing up.

Microtips

To cook rice in the microwave: put 200g / 7oz long-grain white rice, 450ml / 16fl oz boiling water, salt to taste and a small knob of butter or margarine into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 12 minutes, stirring twice during cooking. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff up with a fork before using. To cook 150g / 5oz rice, use 350ml / 12oz boiling water and salt to taste; microwave as above and leave to stand.

Microtips

Cooked, long-grain rice reheats most successfully. Put the rice into a dish, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) as directed below.

1 serving: 1-2 minutes
2 servings: 2-4 minutes
4 servings: 4-6 minutes

Fluff up with a fork to separate grains before serving. There is no need to leave the rice to stand.

Curried rice

16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 celery stalks, chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
400ml / 14fl oz boiling water
175g / 6oz long-grain rice
7.5ml / 1½tsp curry powder
50g / 2oz raisins

SERVES 4

1 Put the celery and butter in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes or until celery is softened. Add the remaining ingredients, except the raising. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir well and reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and continue cooking for a further 12 minutes, or until rice is tender, stirring twice during cooking.

3 Stir in the raisins and let stand, covered for 5 minutes. Fluff up with a fork and serve hot.

Curried rice for two: halve all the ingredients, except the water and use 275ml / 10fl oz boiling water instead. Microwave the celery and butter for 45 seconds, then follow the timings given above.

VARIATION

Cheesy rice: omit the celery, butter, curry powder and raisins. Cook the rice in the boiling water, following the instructions given in step 2 of Curried Rice recipe. Stir in 7.5ml / 1½tsp chopped parsley with fresh herbs such as oregano and 50g / 2oz grated Cheddar cheese and leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff up with a fork to separate the grains and sprinkle with a little paprika before serving; if liked.

Savoury brown rice

29 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

3 spring onions, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
500ml / 18fl oz boiling water
175g / 6oz brown rice
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
salt to taste

SERVES 4

1 Put the onions, celery, parsley and butter in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and stir well.

2 Cover and cook at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 25 minutes, stirring twice during cooking. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff up with a fork to separate the grains of rice before serving.

From left to right: *Curried Rice, Savoury Brown Rice and Cheesy Rice*

Lamb creole

19 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded, chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
225g / 8oz long-grain rice
225g / 8oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
300ml / ½pt boiling water
10ml / 2tsp brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
350g / 12oz cooked, left over lamb, cut into small cubes

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the onion, celery, pepper and oil in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until tender.

2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 12 minutes stirring twice. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Left: *Lamb Creole*
Below *Sweet and Sour Rice*

Sweet and sour rice

21 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
45ml / 3tbls cornflour*
45ml / 3tbls cider vinegar
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
227g / 8oz can pineapple chunks, drained and juice reserved
450g / 1lb lean pork steak, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
227g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and cut in strips
1 small onion, chopped
200g / 7oz long-grain rice, cooked conventionally (or in the microwave see Microtips, page 1002)

SERVES 4

1 Combine the sugar and cornflour in a casserole, then gradually stir in the vinegar and soy sauce, blending until smooth. Stir in the reserved pineapple juice and cubes of pork.

2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 10-15 minutes or

until the pork is no longer pink in the centre. Stir twice.

3 Add the water chestnuts, green pepper and onion, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until vegetables are tender-crisp. Mix in pineapple. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, put the cooked rice in a covered dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Add the pork and vegetable mixture and toss together.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
2¼tbls cornflour

Spinach rice layer

27 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz frozen spinach
150g / 5oz cooked long-grain rice
175g / 6oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
175g / 6oz Italian-style tomato sauce
295g / 10.4oz can cream of mushroom soup
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 4-6

How to microwave Spinach rice layer

Put *the spinach on a plate, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until thawed. Drain well. Put rice in a shallow 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until heated through. Stir in half of the cheese and all the egg and press on to dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until set, rotating the dish after 2 minutes. Put the beef into a casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until meat changes colour; stir once. Drain off any fat, then blend in remaining ingredients except spinach.*

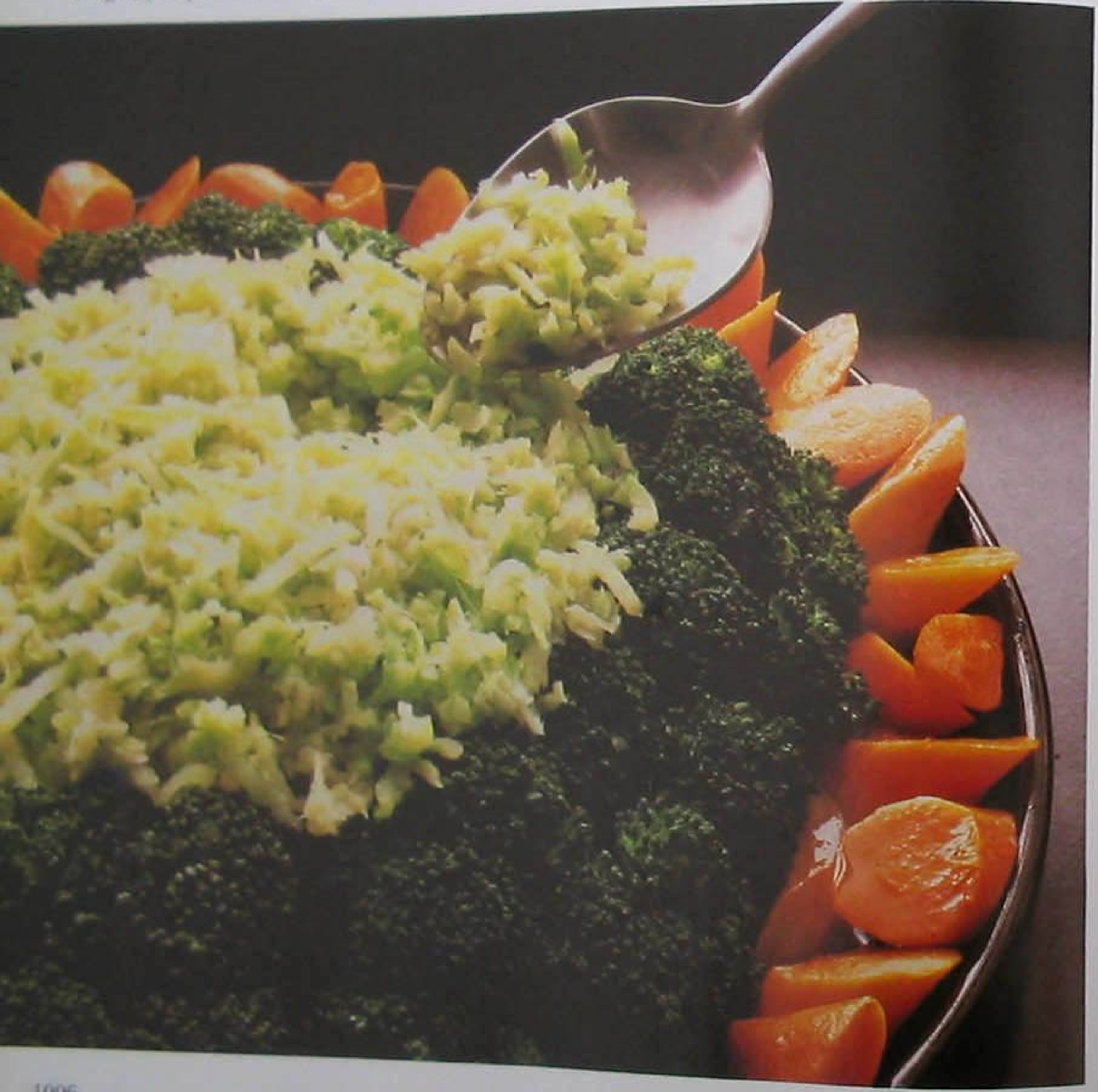
Spoon *the meat mixture over the rice in dish and smooth over surface. Spread the spinach evenly over the meat and then top with the remaining grated cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Rotate the dish a half turn, reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 8-10 minutes.*

Healthy eating 2

Make the most of your microwave and cook fat-free, nutritious dishes which are not only good for you, but delicious as well. Take care with what you eat and you will look better as well as feel better.

Your microwave can be your biggest ally for healthy eating. Increasingly today, we understand that what we eat is an integral part of our good health. A properly balanced diet will give you plenty of energy and vitality without piling on the pounds. And this is where watching calories is important. Calories, or kiloJoules as they're increasingly called these days, are simply the units of energy or fuel your body needs to stay active and healthy. (1 Calorie is 4.2 kiloJoules.) So eating more calories than your body can 'burn' up will lead to flab. Microwaving low-fat food can help reduce calorie intake.

Broccoli and Carrot Platter



Ingredients for healthy eating
Protein, carbohydrates, minerals, water, vitamins, fibre and fat are all essential ingredients in a healthy diet. The areas that most people can afford to cut down in are fats and the sugary foods high in 'empty calories'.

A certain amount of both are necessary for good health. But there seems to be a link between an excessively fatty or sugar high diet and poor health — the microwave makes it very much easier to reduce both and still produce tasty and popular meals.

How can the microwave help?
That's easy. Microwaved food takes so little time to cook it retains vitamins and minerals often lost through lengthier cooking processes such as boiling.

There are other advantages: you need much less fat for microwave cooking – food retains more of its own distinctive flavours, so there's less need to perk it up with fattening sauces. And as it is so flavoursome, seasoning with salt, which is added at the end of microwaving, is less necessary.

Guidelines for healthy eating

- Eat a varied mixture of foods in sensible quantities to ensure you get all the vitamins, minerals, protein and carbohydrate you need for good health.
- Take advantage of the fact that it is better not to salt food before microwaving to cut down the amount you use.
- Consider the timing of your meals. Don't consume the largest number of calories late in the evening. You need the most energy from food at breakfast or lunchtime to see you through the day and you will have more opportunity to burn it off.
- Fibre is filling so choose low-calorie, high-fibre snacks such as raw carrots or an apple to quell any hunger pangs.

Broccoli and carrot platter

8
mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb broccoli
350g / ¾lb carrots, cut into 4cm / 1½in chunks
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground coriander
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Cut broccoli florets from stalks. Trim 2.5cm / 1in from base of stalks then shred the rest in food processor, or grate.

2 Put shredded broccoli in centre of 25cm / 10in diameter, round dish. Surround with florets then carrots.

3 Sprinkle orange juice and coriander over carrots and lemon juice and parsley over broccoli. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-12 minutes, until tender. Rotate a quarter turn three times. Stand, covered, for three minutes.

Per portion
Calories: 50 / Kilojoules: 210
High in fibre and fat-free
High in calcium and iron

Stuffed trout

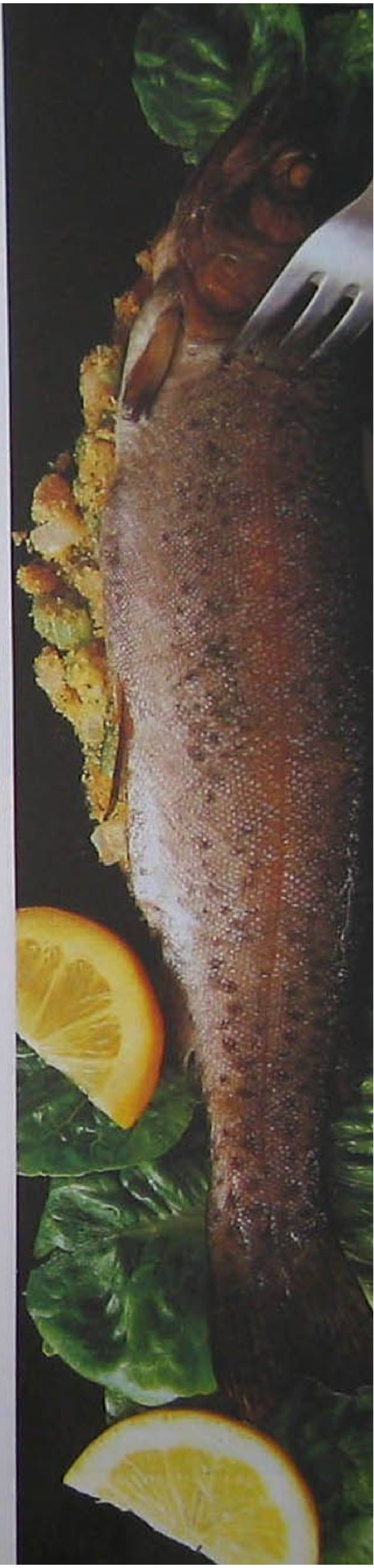
8
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 whole trout, each about 225g / 8oz

STUFFING
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded, chopped
30ml / 2tbls fish stock
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
grated zest of ½ lemon
salt and pepper

SERVES 4



1 Place the celery, onion and green pepper in a bowl with the fish stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Stir in the breadcrumbs, parsley and lemon zest. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2 Spoon a quarter of the stuffing into each trout, securing the cavity with wooden cocktail sticks, if necessary. Place the trout in a large baking dish alternating head to tail and cover.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, rotating the dish a half turn once, until the fish flakes easily. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

Stuffed trout for two: halve all the ingredients for the stuffing and microwave the vegetables for 3-3½ minutes, until tender. Stuff two trout and microwave for 2-3 minutes. Stand for 3 minutes.

VARIATION
Replace the green pepper with 50g / 2oz sliced mushrooms, if wished. Do not microwave with the other vegetables, but stir them in with the breadcrumbs. Not only is this a tasty alternative, but there are even fewer calories if you are keen to cut down.

Per portion:
Calories: 235 / Kilojoules: 985
Low in fat
High in calcium, magnesium

Freezer notes

Thaw frozen trout before stuffing.

To thaw 4 × 225g / 8oz frozen filleted trout, leave in plastic wrapping and lay head to tail in a dish. Make slits in the top of the plastic. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 19-21 minutes, or until still cold but pliable. Let stand for 5-10 minutes before cooking.

To thaw 2 × 225g / 8oz frozen filleted trout follow instructions above and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10-12 minutes. Stand for 5-10 minutes before cooking.

Slimmer's notes

There are a number of clever ways to cut calories — and still dish up tasty meals.

- *Trim all visible fat off meat before cooking.*
- *Substitute low-fat yoghurt for single cream and use thick Greek yoghurt for double cream.*
- *Make the most of high-fibre, filling foods such as jacket potatoes, brown rice and wholemeal pasta so you don't feel tempted to nibble between meals (don't ruin it all by smothering them with butter, though).*
- *Opt for low-fat cheeses like Edam and Gouda or use the new reduced fat Cheddar and Cheshire types.*
- *Replace cream and full-fat soft cheeses with curd or skimmed milk soft cheeses.*
- *Use skimmed instead of whole milk.*

Oriental pork rolls

17
mins

Standing time: none

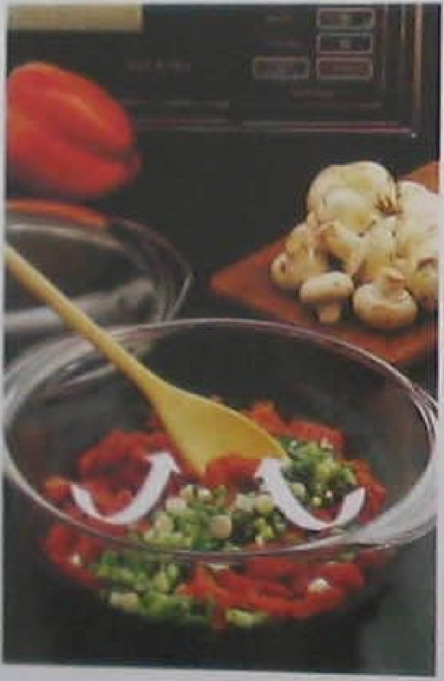
350g / ¾lb lean boneless pork tenderloin, cubed*
4 spring onions, chopped
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
100g / 8oz beansprouts
½ red pepper, chopped
225g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
1 beef stock cube
1 crisp lettuce
soy sauce to serve

SERVES 4

Per portion:
Calories: 200 / Kilojoules: 840
Low in fat
High in iron, vitamin A, B_1, B_2, B_6 and C

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use either pork fillet or boneless loin of pork.

How to microwave Oriental pork rolls



Combine *the pork cubes and spring onions in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink. Stir halfway through the cooking time.*

Mix *in mushrooms, bean sprouts, red pepper, water chestnuts, soy sauce and crumble over the stock cube. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring after 3 minutes and then at end. Drain.*

Place *the whole lettuce in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until the outer leaves are soft and pliable. Remove 4-5 good-sized leaves for filling.*

Spoon *45-60ml / 3-4tbls of the meat and vegetable mixture on to each softened leaf. Roll up each leaf to enclose the filling, securing the rolls firmly with cocktail sticks if necessary to hold the rolls together.*

Place *the lettuce rolls in a rectangular dish, seam side down. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until softened and heated through. Serve the rolls with soy sauce, if wished.*

Fruit Kebabs

Fruit kebabs

4½ mins

Standing time: none

You can serve these hot kebabs with chilled low-fat yoghurt.

150ml / ¼pt unsweetened orange juice
10ml / 2tsp arrowroot
15ml / 1tbls water
pinch of ground cinnamon
1 apple, in 2.5cm / 1in chunks
225g / 8oz can pineapple chunks, drained
225g / 8oz can mandarin orange segments, drained
1 banana, in 12mm / ½in chunks

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the orange juice in a covered jug at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until boiling.

2 Blend the arrowroot with the water, then gradually stir in the hot orange juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds, whisking several times, until thickened. Stir in the cinnamon.

3 Thread the fruit on to eight 15cm / 6in wooden skewers, in the following order: apple, pineapple, orange and banana.

4 Arrange the kebabs on a plate. Brush with half the orange glaze and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes.

5 Turn the kebabs over and brush with remaining glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute more.

Fruit kebabs for two: heat half the orange juice for 30-60 seconds. Blend 5ml / 1tsp arrowroot with 10ml / 2tsp water, stir in the orange juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Use a small apple and small banana and omit the mandarin orange. Thread on to four skewers. Brush with glaze and microwave for 30-60 seconds, turn, brush with remaining glaze and microwave for 1-1¼ minutes.

Per portion
Calories: 105 / Kilojoules: 440
High in fibre and low in fat
High in vitamin C.

Breakfast soufflé

1½ mins

Standing time: none

1 egg white
2 eggs, separated
low fat spread, to grease
large pinch of dried basil
salt and pepper

SERVES 2

1 Whisk the 3 egg whites to soft peaks. Lightly grease a deep cereal bowl with low fat spread.

2 Lightly beat the egg yolks with the basil and seasoning. Fold into egg whites and pour into the bowl.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-3 minutes, or until the mixture is set. Some separation may occur but will not affect dish.

Per portion:
Calories: 100 / Kilojoules. 420
High in iron and zinc
High in vitamin A, D, B_2, E, B_{12}

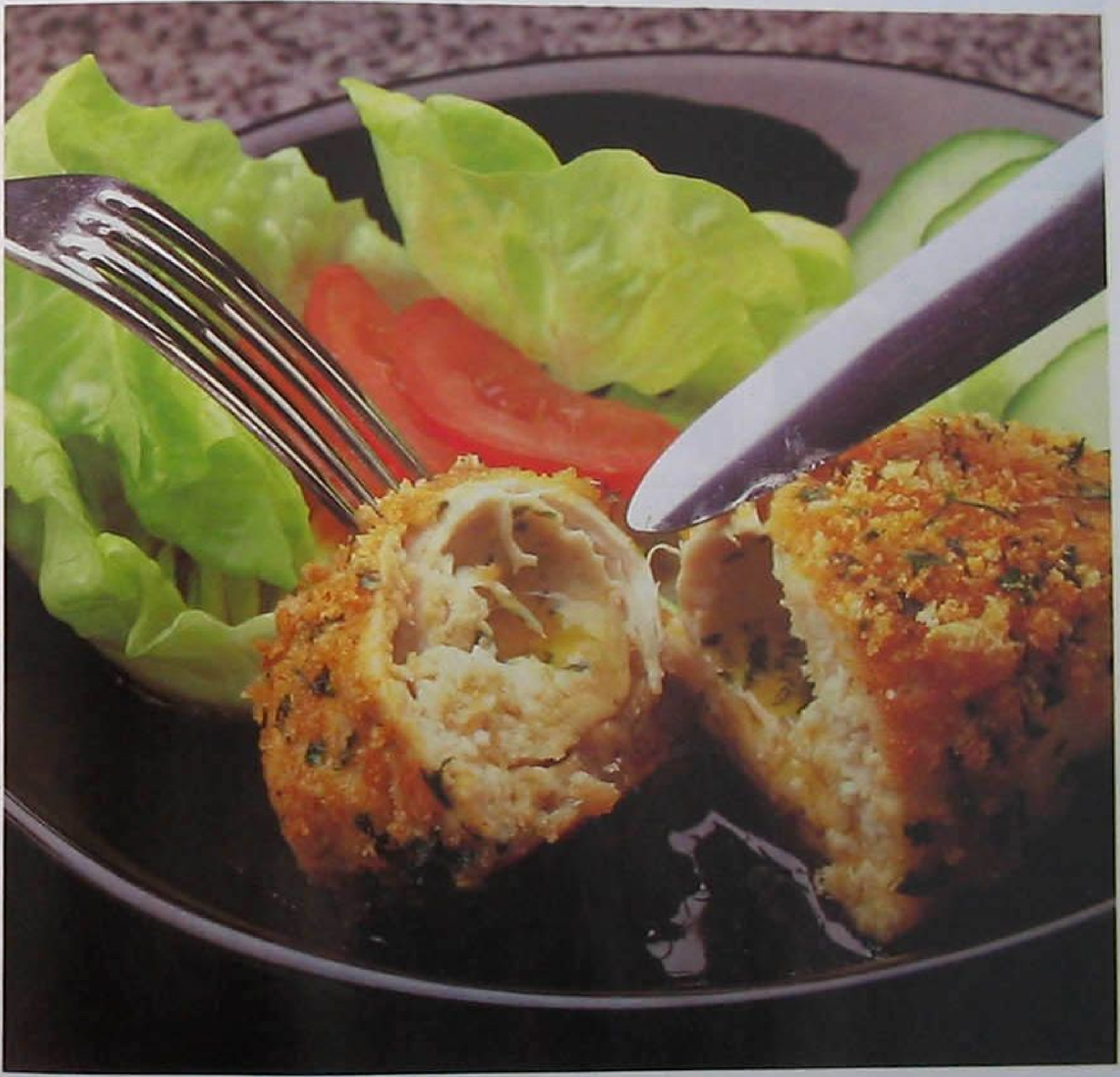
Poultry rolls

Chicken and turkey breasts, stuffed and rolled, are simple to prepare and can be microwaved in minutes. Just pick a filling for an unusual and tasty treat.

The delicate white meat of chicken and turkey breasts microwave beautifully.* The meat is naturally tender, so can be cooked at the fastest setting — 100% (High) — and the moist cooking method means the breasts don't dry out or lose their flavour.

Rolling chicken and turkey breasts around a filling adds an extra dimension to a cook's repertoire. Poultry always combines well with other flavours so a whole range of fillings can be used.

Both chicken and turkey breasts are available from butchers and supermarkets, sold loose or in packs of two or three. Whole turkey breasts are quite large and should be sliced horizontally to serve two. Alternatively, buy breast slices or turkey escalopes.



Easy Chicken Kiev

RAY DUNS

these weigh between 175-225g / 6-8oz each.

Chicken breasts are smaller than turkey breasts, weighing about 150-175g / 5-6oz each — still ample for one serving. Chicken supreme is another name often given to chicken breasts, which sometimes include the tip of the wing bone.

Preparing poultry breasts

Place the poultry breast on a piece of greaseproof paper or between two pieces of cling film. Beat flat with a rolling pin or the flat side of a meat mallet until meat is about 6mm / ¼in thick. Season one side with a little salt and black pepper and then add filling.

Adding the filling

Place filling at the end of the flattened breast and roll breast up, tucking in sides as you go. If there is a large amount of filling, place in centre and fold meat around. Secure the rolls with wooden cocktail sticks. Microwave the rolls at 100% (High). Since the meat is rolled and stuffed, it will take longer to microwave than normal, and the more substantial the filling, the more time needed.

Meat is cooked when no longer pink and juices run clear when pierced with a knife. Stand rolls for five minutes before serving.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use whole, boned chicken breasts.

Easy chicken Kiev

6¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz butter
10ml / 2tsp dried chives
1 clove garlic, crushed
white pepper
4 chicken breasts, (about 575g / 1¼lb total weight)
60ml / 4tbls browned breadcrumbs
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp paprika

SERVES 4

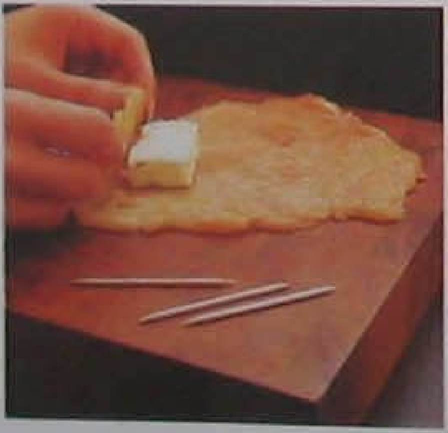
How to microwave Easy chicken Kiev

Place *100g / 4oz of the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 30% (Low) for 10 seconds or until soft but not melted. Add chives, garlic and pepper and mix well.*

Shape *the butter into four 4 × 2.5cm / 1½ × 1in rectangles on a piece of greaseproof paper. Once shaped, place each in freezer and chill for 10 minutes until firm.*

Place *chicken breasts on greaseproof paper and beat to a 6mm / ¼in thickness. Place remaining butter in small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds.*

Place *the breadcrumbs, grated Parmesan cheese, parsley and paprika in a shallow bowl or on a sheet of greaseproof paper and mix well. Set to one side.*



Place *the butter rectangles at the end of each chicken breast. Fold end over butter, then fold in sides and roll up. Secure with cocktail sticks. Brush chicken rolls with melted butter.*

Roll *in crumb mixture; place around edge of a round dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, turning rolls and rotating dish once. Stand for 5 minutes.*

Chicken and Bacon Rolls

Chicken and bacon rolls

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz smoked back bacon, rinds removed, chopped
4 boneless chicken breasts, about 575g / 1¼lb total weight) beaten out to 6mm / ¼in thickness
pepper, to taste
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 × 300g / 11oz can cream of mushroom soup
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
50g / 2oz flaked almonds

SERVES 4

1 Place bacon in a shallow dish. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until crisp, stirring once.
2 Season each chicken breast with a little pepper. Place a quarter of the bacon on top, roll up and secure with a wooden cocktail stick.
3 Place mushrooms in a baking dish, arrange chicken rolls on top. Combine soup and soured cream, pour over chicken.
4 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Rearrange chicken and stir sauce. Cook for a further 5-6 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink.
5 Stand for 5 minutes, then sprinkle with almonds. Serve with noodles or plain boiled rice.

Artichoke chicken rolls

9¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
1 spring onion, finely chopped
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt single cream
150ml / ¼pt water
150g / 6oz canned artichoke hearts, about 6 hearts
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls fresh brown breadcrumbs
4 boneless chicken breasts, (about 575g / 1¼lb total weight), beaten out to 6mm / ¼in thickness

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a bowl, cover and microwave, covered at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted. Add flour, stock cube, spring onion and seasoning and stir. Blend in cream and water.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until thickened, stirring every minute. Set aside.
3 Drain and chop artichoke hearts mix with cheese and breadcrumbs. Place a quarter of the mixture in the centre of each chicken breast. fold chicken over stuffing and secure with wooden cocktail sticks.
4 Place rolls, seam side up in a shallow baking dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Rearrange rolls and turn over. Coat evenly with sauce, then microwave for a further 3-4 minutes until chicken is tender and juices run clear. Stand for 5 minutes.

Slimmer's notes

Turkey or chicken breast rolls can be simply converted to make a low-calorie meal. For Artichoke Chicken Rolls, use skimmed milk for the cream and substitute Edam for Cheddar cheese. This works out at 300Cal / 1,260kJ per serving. A 100g / 4oz serving of new potatoes will add 75Cal / 315kJ; a 150g / 5oz jacket potato is 130Cal / 546kJ.

Turkey asparagus rolls

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 boneless turkey breasts (700g / 1½lb total weight) beaten to 6mm / ¼in thickness
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried rosemary
50g / 2oz mozzarella cheese
200g / 7oz packet frozen asparagus spears, thawed
pinch of paprika
10ml / 2tsp grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Place turkey breasts on board, season well and sprinkle with garlic and rosemary.

2 Lay thin slices of mozzarella on top, with four asparagus spears on the mozzarella. Roll up and secure with a cocktail stick.

3 Sprinkle rolls lightly with paprika, then place, seam side down around the outside of a baking dish. Cover with greaseproof paper.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Turn and rearrange rolls, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and re-cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes or until turkey is tender and juices run clear. Stand for 5 minutes. Remove cocktail sticks.

Freezer notes

To thaw asparagus spears, pierce the wrapping two to three times with a knife and then microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3 minutes. Remove from packet and place on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for a further 2½-3 minutes until just thawed. Stand for 2-3 minutes, then drain.

If frozen asparagus spears are not available, use canned asparagus. The turkey wrapping prevents overcooking.

Turkey Asparagus Rolls, sprinkled with Parmesan to serve

Turkey roulades

11½ mins

Standing time: none

STUFFING
100g / 4oz mushrooms, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
small clove of garlic, crushed
knob of butter
30ml / 2tbls fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
2 boneless turkey breasts, (175-200g / 6-7oz each) beaten about to 6mm / ¼in thickness
30ml / 2tbls golden or browned breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls vegetable or olive oil

MUSHROOM SAUCE
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt single cream
45ml / 3tbls white wine

SERVES 2

1 Make the stuffing. Combine mushrooms, onion, celery, garlic and butter in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes or until onion is tender. Stir in the fresh breadcrumbs and season.

2 Place half the mixture on each

Turkey Roulades

Freezer notes

Turkey Roulades (page 1014) freeze well; they can be thawed and cooked in one simple operation. After coating in breadcrumbs, place rolls in microwave / freezer dish, cover and freeze for up to 1 month. To cook and serve: remove freezer covering and re-cover with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 10-12 minutes or until meat is no longer pink, rearranging rolls and giving dish a half turn halfway through cooking. Make sauce, see step 4, and serve.

of the turkey breasts. Fold sides of breast over, roll up and secure each with a wooden cocktail stick.

3 Mix golden breadcrumbs and parsley. Brush rolls with oil and roll in breadcrumb mixture. Arrange in a shallow baking dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, rearranging after 3 minutes. Cover tightly and set aside while making sauce.

4 Make sauce. Combine mushrooms, onion and butter and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until onions are tender. Add flour and seasoning and mix well. Blend in cream.

5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until thickened and bubbly, stirring once or twice. Stir in wine and microwave for a further 30 seconds until heated through. Pour the sauce over the turkey breasts when about to serve.

Sweet 'n' sour turkey

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz lean minced beef
50g / 2oz finely chopped walnuts
15ml / 1tbls fresh white breadcrumbs
1 small onion, very finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground nutmeg
4 boneless turkey breasts, about 225g / 8oz each, beaten out to 6mm / ¼in thickness
15ml / 1tbls dark rum
15ml / 1tbls runny honey
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
225g / 8oz can sliced pineapple, drained
20ml / 4tsp sesame seeds

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix minced beef, walnuts, breadcrumbs, onion, soy sauce and spices in a bowl.

2 Place a quarter of the mixture in centre of each turkey breast. Roll up and secure with a cocktail stick. Place in a shallow baking dish.

3 Mix rum, honey and soy sauce. Brush about one third over the turkey rolls and cover with greaseproof paper.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Rearrange rolls and turn over, brush with another third of the sauce.

5 Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes, then rearrange again, placing a pineapple slice under each roll. Add remaining sauce and sprinkle each roll with 5ml / 1tsp sesame seeds.

6 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until turkey is tender and juices run clear. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve one per person, or cut rolls into 12mm / ½in slices to serve 6.

Sweet 'n' Sour Turkey

Freezer dinner for 4

Make the most of the microwave's talent for thawing and heating foods. Keep the whole meal ready in the freezer and you will always be prepared for instant entertaining.

Many dishes freeze well — and microwaving is the fastest, most efficient way to thaw and heat them without damaging their flavour. This sophisticated menu can be ready from frozen in just under an hour.

Prepare and freeze the dishes any time that you are free, but remember that to enjoy the food at its best, do not store longer than the recommended times. Except for the pizza bases and casserole, no standing time is necessary.

Take care when microwaving the Seafood Starter and the vegetable towers not to heat longer than is necessary or they will toughen. Cook the pasta conventionally in boiling salted water, leaving the microwave free for other jobs.

Seafood starter

8
mins

Thawing and heating time: 15 mins

Standing after thawing: none

These delicious individual starters make a good combination with crisp Melba toast or crusty bread. Use ocean sticks or fresh, cooked prawns, shrimps, crabmeat or mussels for more luxury.

Beef and Celery Casserole and Cauliflower and Carrot Towers

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
pinch of cayenne pepper
150ml / 5fl oz whipping cream
15ml / 1tbls white wine
50g / 2oz mushrooms, chopped
175g / 6oz ocean or seafood sticks chopped
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter and onion in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
2 Add the flour, salt, pepper, cayenne, cream, wine and mushrooms.
3 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 3-4 minutes, stirring, until thick.
4 Stir in the ocean sticks and half the cheese. Divide between four ceramic baking shells. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, or until the cheese melts. Cool, then wrap and freeze in the dishes for up to 1 month. Thaw according to the Countdown.

MENU

Seafood Starter
Creamy seafood in a rich sauce

Beef and Celery Casserole
Tender beef in wine gravy with the tang of orange

Cauliflower and Carrot Towers
Vegetable purée set in moulds

Buttered Pasta
Fresh noodles tossed in butter

Fresh Fruit Pizza
Fruit and cream cheese on a crisp base

SERVES 4

Countdown

As soon as you come in

Remove all the dishes from the freezer. Microwave the pizza base at 100% (High) for 1 minute, then stand for 5 minutes. Soften the cream cheese by microwaving at 30% (Low) for 10-15 seconds. Thaw the casserole by microwaving, covered at 20-30% (Defrost) for 40 minutes; break up the pieces and stir them regularly.

While the casserole thaws

Spread the cream cheese evenly over the pizza base. Prepare the fruit for the base, and arrange on cream cheese. Cook the noodles conventionally in boiling salted water for 3-4 minutes if fresh, 12-15 minutes if dried (see recipe Part 16, page 433).

When the casserole has thawed

Microwave the glaze and spoon over the pizza when cool. Set aside in a cool place (this allows the base to soften before cutting). To thaw the vegetable towers, arrange the covered ramekins in a ring on the floor of the cooker and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 12-13 minutes, until the towers are just soft to the touch.

Just before the meal

Arrange the Seafood Starters in a ring in the cooker and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10-15 minutes, or until well thawed. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for a further 5 minutes, or until hot. Serve with crusty bread and butter.

While the first course is served

Microwave the casserole at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until heated through. Allow to stand while microwaving the vegetable towers at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until hot. Turn out and serve immediately.

Beef and celery casserole

56 mins

Thawing and heating time: 48 mins

Standing after thawing: 2-3½ mins

1.1kg / 2½lb braising steak
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls oil
1 large onion, sliced
350ml / 12fl oz red wine
1 beef stock cube
1 orange
4 celery stalks, cut in 2.5cm / 1in pieces
4 carrots, sliced in 12mm / ½in pieces

SERVES 4

1 Trim the meat and cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes. Sift the flour with salt and pepper to taste and place in a polythene bag with the meat. Shake well to coat the meat.
2 Pour the oil into a large casserole dish and add the onion. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the onions are soft and transparent.
3 Stir in the meat and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes. Add wine and stock. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 30-35 minutes, until meat is just tender.
4 Pare the orange rind finely and cut into very fine strips. Squeeze the juice from the fruit.
5 Add the rind and juice to the casserole with the celery and carrots. Stir well and cover. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 20 minutes, or until celery is just tender. Cool completely. Pour into a rigid polythene container leaving 12mm / ½in headspace. Cover, label and freeze for up to 2 months. Thaw according to the instructions in the Countdown.

Microtips

If you want to make this satisfying casserole dish to serve straight away, allow it to stand for 5 minutes after microwaving time to complete cooking.

Cauliflower and carrot towers

15 mins

Thawing and heating time: 14½ mins

Standing after thawing: none

CAULIFLOWER TOWERS
450g / 1lb cauliflower, chopped
60ml / 4tbls milk
25g / 1oz butter
50g / 2oz potato, grated
salt and pepper
2 eggs
grated nutmeg

CARROT TOWERS
450g / 1lb carrots, thinly sliced
25g / 1oz butter
60ml / 4tbls chicken stock
salt and pepper
2 eggs
flat-leaved parsley to garnish

SERVES 4

1 To make the cauliflower towers, place the cauliflower in a dish with the milk, butter and potato. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes until the vegetables are just tender, stirring several times.
2 Purée in a blender, adding the eggs when the mixture is smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste and mix in the grated nutmeg. Divide between four small greased ramekins.
3 To make the carrot towers place the carrot in a dish with the butter and stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or until tender. Purée in a blender and season to taste. Beat in the eggs and spoon into four small greased ramekins.
4 Cover all eight ramekins with cling film and arrange in a ring in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, rearranging once and giving a quarter turn once every two minutes, until just firm to the touch on top.
5 Cool completely, then wrap, label and freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw following the instructions in the Countdown. Turn out on to a serving dish and garnish with sprigs of flat-leaved parsley.

Fresh fruit pizza

17½ mins

Thawing and heating time: 1 min

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

125ml / 4fl oz milk
20ml / 4tsp dried yeast
large pinch of sugar
50g / 2oz butter
2 eggs, beaten
400g / 14oz plain flour
large pinch of salt
Cheese 'n' fruit topping (see right)

MAKES 2 PIZZA BASES

1 Microwave the milk in a jug at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until warm. Sprinkle the yeast on top and stir in the sugar. Leave in a warm place until frothy.
2 Microwave the butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds to melt. Mix into the yeast mixture with the egg. Beat well.
3 Sift the flour and salt, add the liquid and mix well to a pliable dough. Knead until elastic. Place in a lightly greased bowl, cover and microwave at 10% (Warm) for 4 minutes. Remove and stand for 10-15 minutes. Repeat procedure until doubled in size.
4 Knock back dough and knead lightly on a floured surface. Halve the dough and roll out half to fit a 25-30cm / 10-12in pizza dish, turning the edges up slightly.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, giving a quarter turn after 1 minute. Repeat with the second half. Brown under a hot grill for a golden crust. Freeze, separately wrapped, for up to 6 months. Thaw one base according to the instructions in the Countdown. Add the cheese 'n' fruit topping.

Cheese 'n' fruit topping

2¼ mins

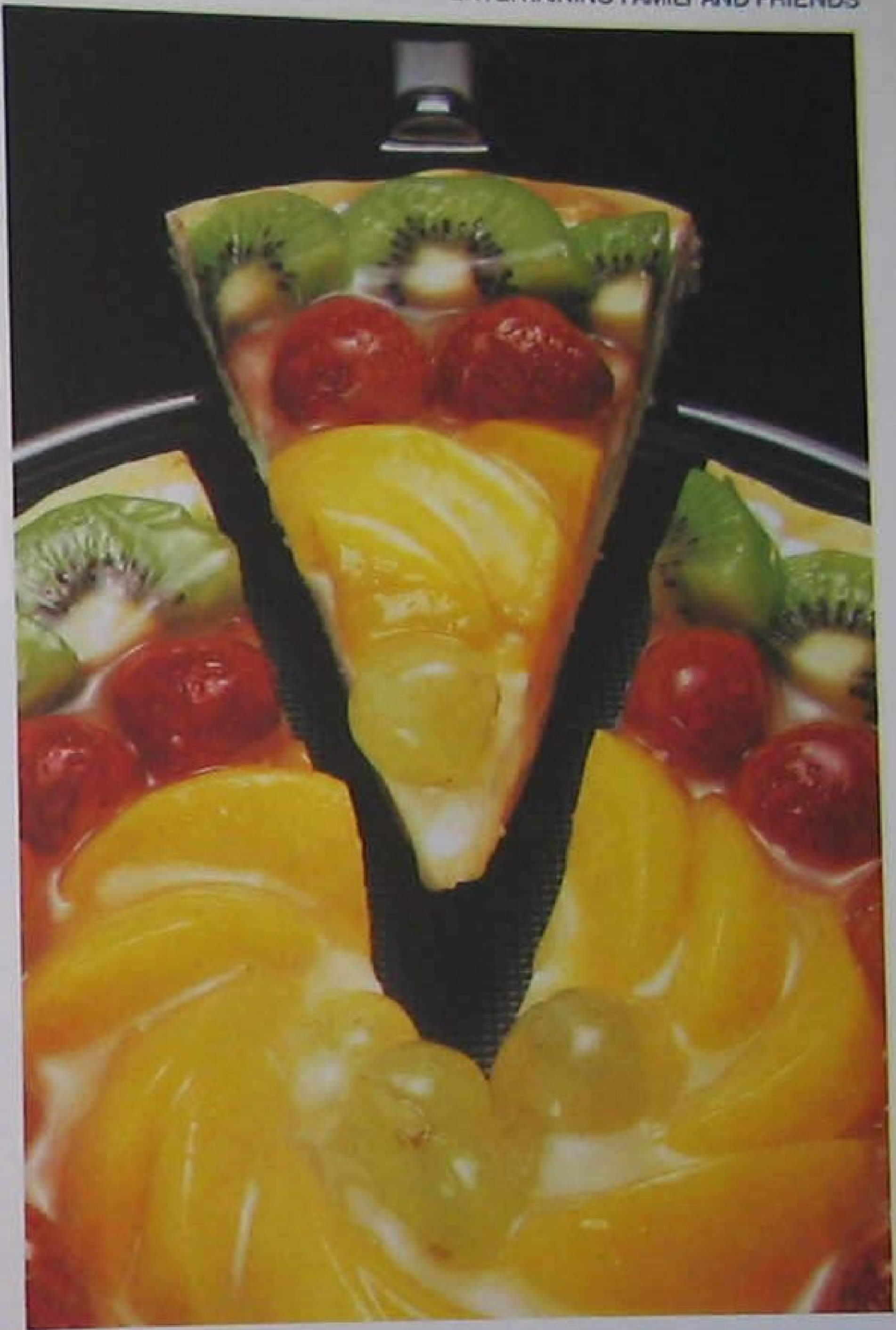
Standing time: none

225g / 8oz cream cheese
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
grated zest of 1 lemon
350g / 12oz prepared fresh fruit

GLAZE
175ml / 6fl oz apple juice
10ml / 2tsp arrowroot

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 BASE

1 Soften the cream cheese by microwaving at 30% (Low) for 10-15 seconds. Beat with the sugar and lemon zest, then spread over pizza base to within 12mm / ½in of the edge.
2 Arrange the fruit slices decoratively on the cream cheese. Mix the apple juice and arrowroot and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until clear and thick, stirring several times. Cool slightly, then spoon over the fruit.



RAY DUNS

How to freeze and thaw Pizza bases

Reynolds Wrap

To freeze: *Wrap each base closely in foil, freezer cling film or a polythene bag; seal, label and freeze for up to one month.*

To thaw: *unwrap one base and place on a microwave roasting rack. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, then stand for 5 minutes.*

Microwaving leeks

Delicious in casseroles and soups, as a starter or salad, leeks cook to perfection in the microwave. With just a little water and minimum cooking, they turn out crisp and crunchy every time.

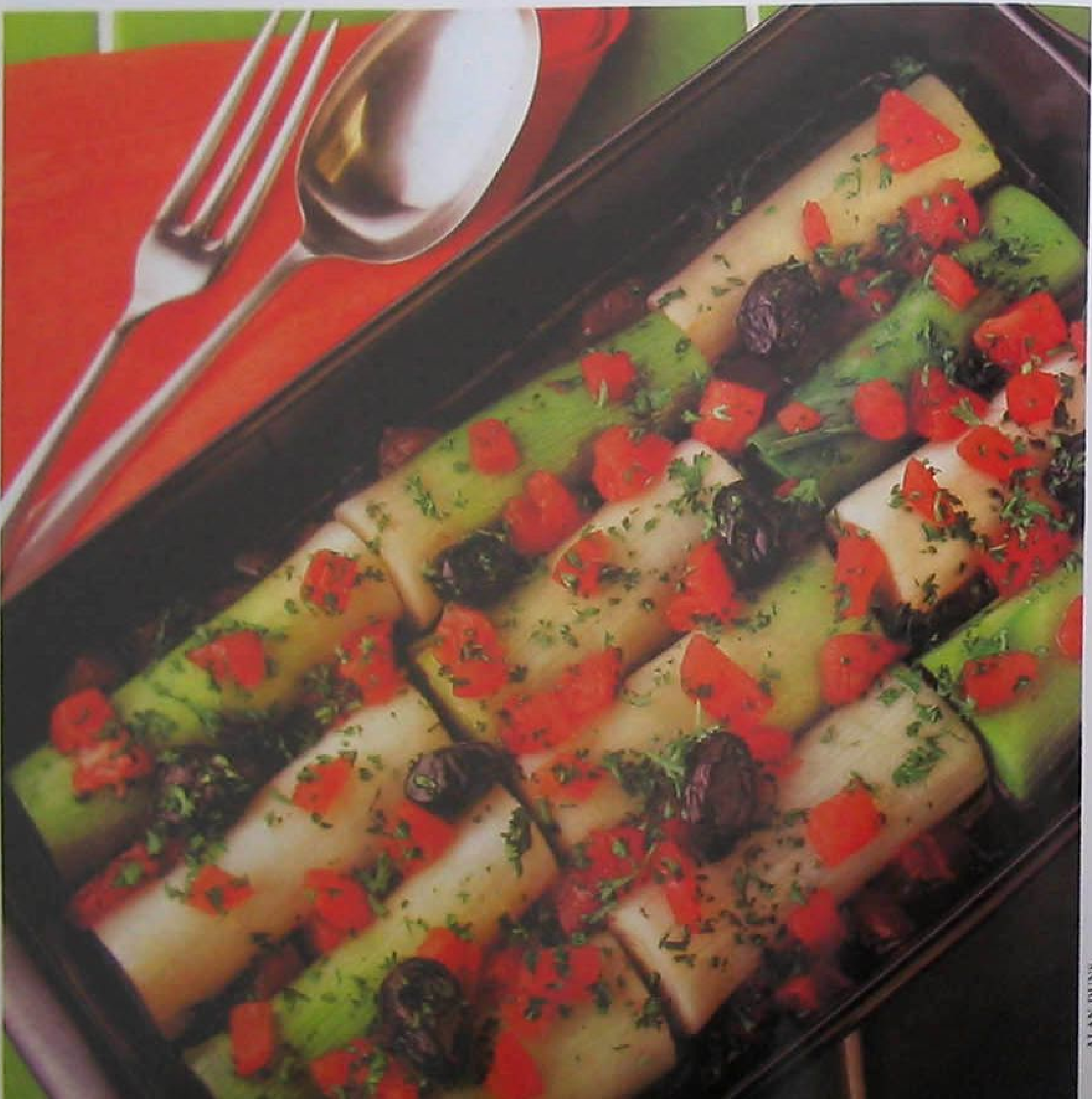
Leeks are a mild-tasting member of the onion family, and are excellent on their own, in a sauce or as part of a dish. Their distinct flavour is enhanced with microwave cooking and, because so little water is required, they come out crisp and fresh-tasting without fail — never soggy or waterlogged.

Selecting and storing leeks

Select leeks with fresh, dark green tops and small to medium necks, which are white at least 5-6.5cm / 2-3in from the root end. Straight leeks will be more tender than those with bulbous ends. Avoid leeks with yellow or wilted tops; they may be old and are tough and stringy to eat.

Cut off the roots and trim tops, leaving 4cm / 1½in of dark green leaves. Remove any dry outer skin, score as directed in the steps, and wash thoroughly in cold water. Store in a sealed polythene bag in the refrigerator and use within one or two weeks.

Leek Vinaigrette



ALAN DUNS

Leek and bacon savoury

9½ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

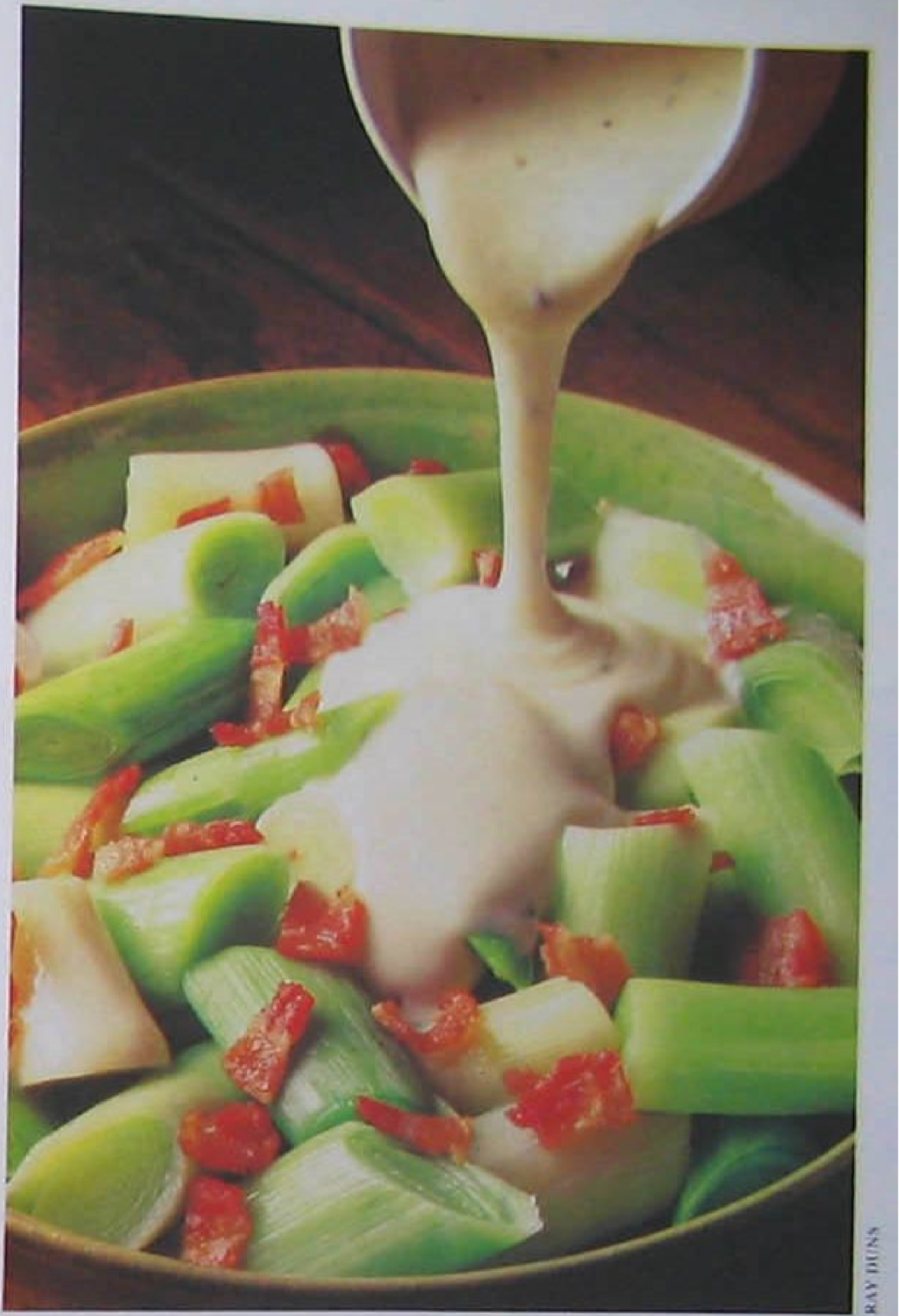
Serve this dish as an accompaniment to chicken and roasts.

450g / 1lb leeks, trimmed
45ml / 3tbls water
5 bacon rashers, cooked and crumbled

SAUCE
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
425ml / ¾pt milk
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs
5ml / 1tsp made mustard
salt and pepper
50-75g / 2-3oz Emmental or Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

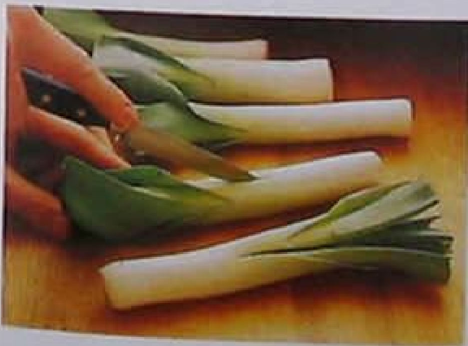
1 Microwave the leeks in a large dish as directed in the steps, below. Cut into 2.5cm / 1in slices and sprinkle over the bacon. Set aside.
2 For the sauce, place the butter in a bowl or jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to melt. Stir in the flour and blend in the milk until smooth. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring every 1½ minutes until the sauce is thick and smooth.
3 Add the seasonings and stir in the grated cheese. Pour the sauce over the leeks and bacon and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes to heat through.



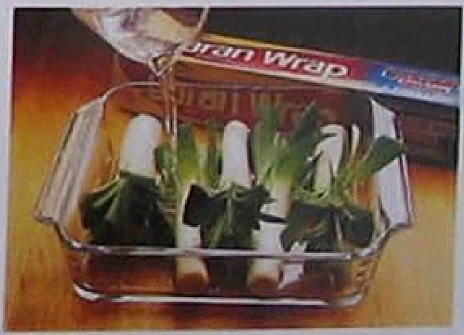
Leek and Bacon Savoury

RAY DUNS

How to microwave leeks



Trim *and peel five or six leeks (about 900g / 2lb). Use a sharp knife to slit the leeks from the top of the white part up through the green.*



Give *the leeks a quarter turn and slit again. Rinse thoroughly in cold water. Place in a rectangular dish with 75ml / 5tbls water and cover.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes; rearrange twice. Stand 3-5 minutes; drain. For 450g / 1lb leeks, use 45ml / 3tbls water for 3-5 minutes.*

Leek stir-fry

11½ mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls oil
450g / 1lb leeks, cut into 12mm / ½in slices
2 carrots, very thinly sliced
225g / 8oz small broccoli florets
1 large red pepper, seeded and finely sliced
5ml / 1tsp light soy sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil, then quickly stir in leeks. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes.

2 Add the carrots and stir well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, then stir in the broccoli and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes.

3 Stir in the red pepper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes; all the vegetables should be crisp to the bite. Sprinkle over the soy sauce and season with salt and pepper. Serve at once.

Microtips

Exact cooking time will depend on how thinly the vegetables are sliced. You may need to vary the cooking time according to the size of the slices.

Vichyssoise

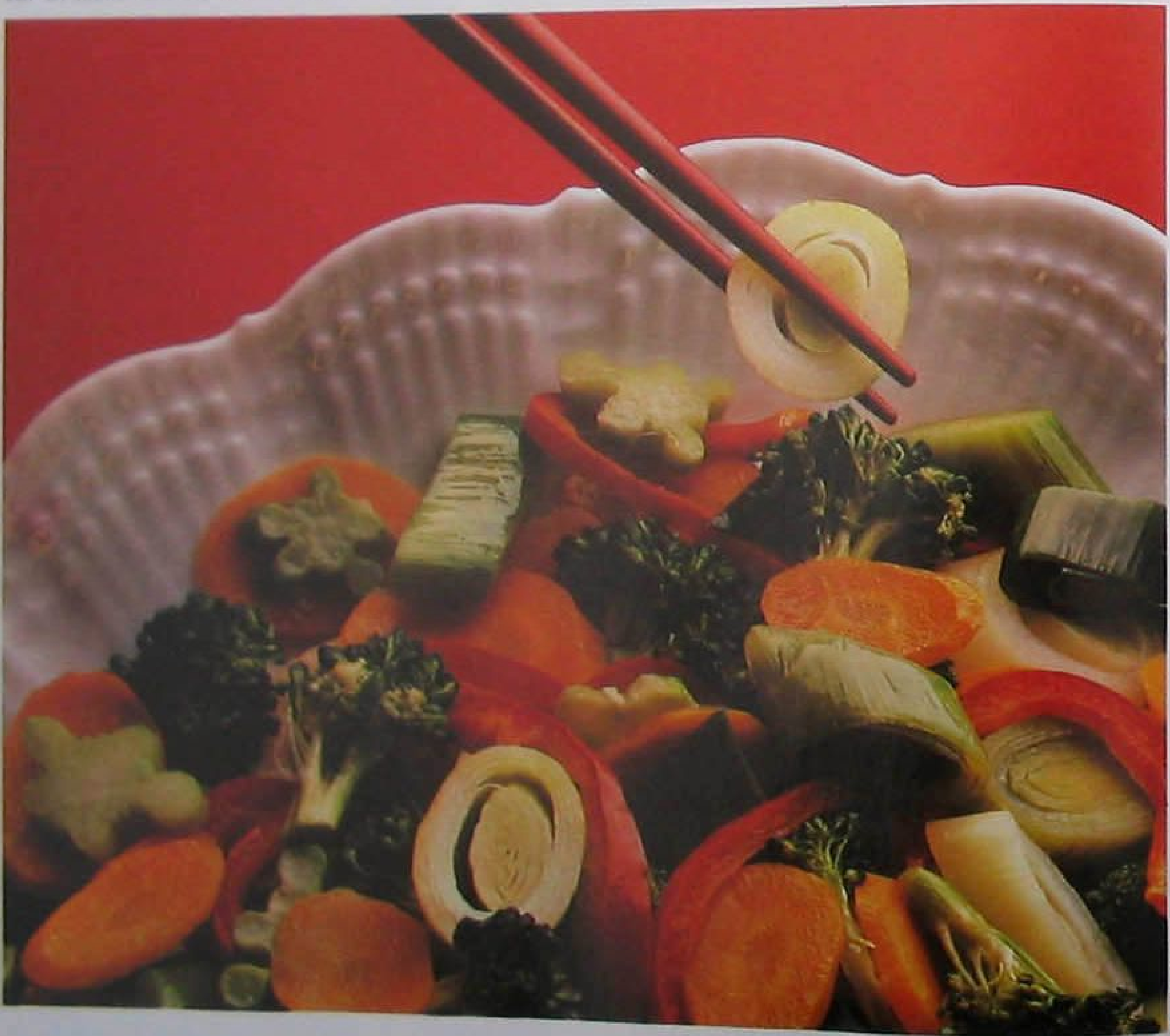
19½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
900g / 2lb leeks, white parts only, thinly sliced
1 large potato, (about 225g / 8oz), peeled and sliced
575ml / 1pt chicken stock
salt and pepper
425ml / 15fl oz single cream
snipped chives, to serve

SERVES 6

1 Place the butter in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or



Leek Stir-fry

ALAN DUNS

until completely melted.
2 Stir in the leeks, tossing to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Add the potato, stir well, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, until the leeks are soft.
4 Add the chicken stock, season to taste, with salt and pepper, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes until all the vegetables are very soft.
5 Purée the soup in a food processor or blender, then rub through a sieve. Leave to cool.
6 When cold, stir in most of the cream and chill in the refrigerator until very cold. Swirl the remaining cream into each dish and sprinkle with snipped chives just before serving.

Leek vinaigrette

6½
mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Serve this colourful dish as a delicious starter, accompanied by crumbly brown bread. It also looks very attractive as part of a colourful buffet. Make up your own vinaigrette dressing, if preferred, and continue as directed.

900g / 2lb leeks
2 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
75ml / 3fl oz bottled vinaigrette or French dressing
8 small black olives
15ml / 1tbls finely chopped parsley

SERVES 6

1 Prepare and microwave the leeks as directed in the steps, page 1021. Drain and slice in half. Arrange in a serving dish and scatter over the chopped tomatoes. Set aside.
2 In a small bowl, microwave the vinaigrette dressing at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds, until hot but not boiling. Pour over the leeks and chill well.
3 Just before serving, arrange the olives on top of the leeks and scatter over the parsley.

Leek 'n' tomato casserole

15
mins

Standing time: 3 mins

4 leeks, thinly sliced
1 onion, sliced
30ml / 2tbls oil
1 garlic clove, finely chopped or crushed
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped parsley
1 bay leaf
juice of ½ lemon
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Combine the leeks, onion, oil and garlic in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.
2 Stir in all the remaining ingredients, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes until the leeks are tender, stirring two or three times during the cooking time. Stand for 3 minutes and remove the bay leaf before serving.

Cook's notes

To serve Leek 'n' Tomato casserole as a light supper dish for three or four, sprinkle the prepared dish generously with grated cheese and brown under the grill for a few minutes, see picture below. Serve with lots of crusty bread to mop up the juices, and green salad, if liked.

Leek 'n' Tomato Casserole

ALAN DUNS

Making the most of sponge

A microwaved sponge cake takes mere minutes to cook and, with a few clever additions, can be turned into a variety of puddings and teatime treats.

Many traditional desserts are based on cake — sponge layers, ice cream gateaux, charlottes and trifles, and whether you make your own sponge cake, make one from a packet mix or buy a ready-made cake, there are plenty of ways in which the microwave can help make delicious sponge desserts.

If you are catering for two to four people, a 20cm / 8in cake can be divided up into three different desserts — or you can dress up a plain or chocolate sponge to make a striking cake for up to six.

Microwaved cakes become dry more quickly than the conventionally baked variety, so turn this to your advantage using the cake in crisp crumb form, or well-soaked in fruit juice, liqueur or custard.

Store unused cake in the freezer, closely wrapped in foil or cling film, for up to three months. To thaw, unwrap any foil, cover with cling film and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes, then allow to stand for up to 10 minutes to thaw completely.

Whisked sponge cake

4½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz caster sugar
4 eggs
50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted

MAKES A 20cm / 8in CAKE

1 Line a 20cm / 8in round cake dish with cling film.
2 Whisk the sugar and eggs in a large bowl over hot water until pale and fluffy and doubled in volume. (The mixture should leave a trail when the whisk is lifted.)
3 Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted.
4 Gently spoon the sifted flour over the egg mixture and pour the melted butter down the side of the bowl. Fold the ingredients together carefully, using a large metal spoon. Cut into the mixture, starting at one side of the bowl and work in a figure of eight across to the opposite side, taking care not to knock air out of the mixture.
5 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until just firm in the middle, giving the dish a quarter turn after 3 minutes.
6 Cover the sponge with a piece of absorbent paper and leave to stand for 10 minutes. During this time the cake will shrink away from the sides of the dish and the damp patches on the surface will dry up.
7 Turn out the cake and cool completely on a wire rack.

From top: *Mocha Crumble, Raspberry Trifle, Vanilla Cream Sandwich*

VARIATION

Chocolate whisked sponge cake: use the same method as for the plain sponge, but use 30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder in place of the same quantity of flour. Sift the flour and cocoa together and use as before. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, then leave to stand for 10 minutes.

Packet mix sponge

5 mins

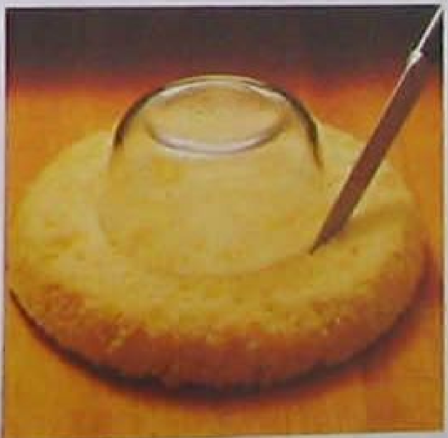
Standing time: 10 mins

1 packet plain sponge mix
1 egg
water according to packet instructions, plus 15ml / 1tbls

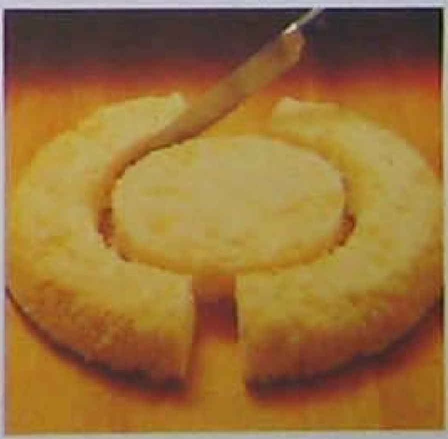
MAKES A 20cm / 8in CAKE

1 Make up the sponge mix according to the instructions on the packet, adding the extra water to make a slightly moister mixture.
2 Line a 20cm / 8in round cake dish with cling film.
3 Spread the cake mixture evenly

How to divide plain sponge cake



Invert *a 12.5cm / 5in diameter bowl over the middle of the cooled cake. Cut around the edge of the bowl to form a ring and a circle.*



Divide *the outer ring in half to leave two arcs and a central circle of sponge. Use the pieces of cake in the recipes as indicated.*

in the prepared dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn after 3 minutes.
4 Allow to stand in the dish for 10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Microtips

Microwave cake mixtures need to be slightly moister than those for conventional baking. The extra 15ml / 1tbls water gives a lighter, moister result.

Vanilla cream sandwich

3¾ mins

Standing time: none

1 inner round of plain sponge cake (see steps, page 1025)
glacé cherries or other fruit

VANILLA CREAM
10ml / 2tsp sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
125ml / 4fl oz milk
1 egg yolk, beaten
15g / ½oz butter
few drops of vanilla flavouring

CHOCOLATE TOPPING
50g / 2oz chocolate drops
15ml / 1tbls golden syrup
15g / ½oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the sugar, cornflour and milk, stirring until smooth. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until thick, stirring every minute. Beat a little of the hot mixture into the egg yolks. Return to the hot mixture, beat well and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Beat in butter and vanilla. Cool.
2 Slice the cake horizontally through the middle and sandwich together with the vanilla cream.
3 To make the topping, place the chocolate, syrup and butter in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until melted, stirring after 20 seconds. Beat until smooth and glossy. Spread evenly over the top of the sandwiched cake and decorate with cherries or other fruit. Keep in a cool place until ready to serve.

Mocha crumbles

11 mins

Standing time: none

¼ outer ring of plain sponge cake (see steps, page 1025)
30ml / 2tbls shredded coconut
45ml / 3tbls almonds, slivered
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon

MOCHA PUDDING
375ml / 13fl oz milk
30ml / 2tbls sugar
45ml / 3tbls cocoa powder
50ml / 10tsp custard powder
10ml / 2tsp instant coffee granules
125ml / 4fl oz coffee liqueur
3 egg yolks, beaten

SERVES 4

1 Microwave all but 45ml / 3tbls of the milk at 100% (High) for 2-3½ minutes, until just hot.
2 Mix the remaining milk into the sugar, cocoa, custard and coffee, blending well until smooth.
3 Gradually mix in the hot milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir well, then microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2-3 minutes, until smooth and thick.
4 Beat in egg yolks and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Whisk well and pour into four heatproof dessert glasses.

Autumn Plum Pudding

5 Crumble the cake and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until very hot, stirring every 30 seconds. Dry and cool on paper.

6 Spread coconut on a dish and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 2½-4 minutes, until light brown, stirring every 30 seconds. Cool and mix with sponge, almonds and cinnamon. Sprinkle the mixture over the desserts and serve.

Cook's notes

Store the topping in an airtight container for up to two weeks, or store frozen for up to three months in a polythene bag.

Raspberry trifle

1
min

Standing time: none

As the trifle is soaked, it doesn't matter if you use slightly stale cake for this recipe.

75g / 3oz raspberry jam
15ml / 1tbls brandy
½ outer ring of plain sponge cake (see steps, page 1025)
Vanilla cream (see Vanilla cream sandwich)
22.5ml / 1½tbls almonds, slivered

SERVES 2

1 Place the jam in a small bowl with the brandy. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes until the jam is soft and warm. Mix well.

2 Cut the cake into 12mm / ½in slices. Layer a third of the slices in the base of 575ml / 1pt dish and spoon half of the jam over the top. Add another layer of sponge slices and the remaining jam. Add a final layer of cake, then spread the vanilla cream over the top. Cover and refrigerate for up to a day before serving decorated with the almond slivers.

VARIATION

If preferred, substitute sherry for the brandy and add a layer of lightly whipped double cream on the top of the trifle for a more traditional pudding. Layer the cake with drained canned fruit in place of the jam, if liked.

Autumn plum pudding

4
mins

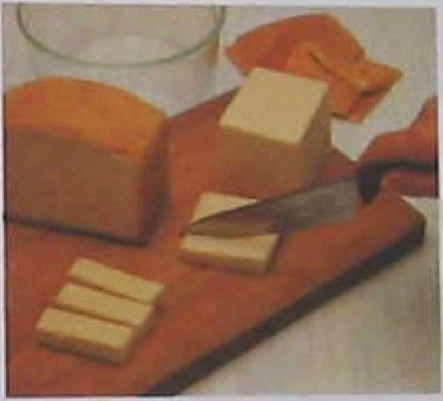
Standing time: none

Use well-coloured, rosy plums for a good appearance when the juices seep through the outer layer of cake.

1 bought plain rich sponge cake (like Madeira)
700g / 1½lb plums, halved and stoned
finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
50-75g / 2-3oz caster sugar

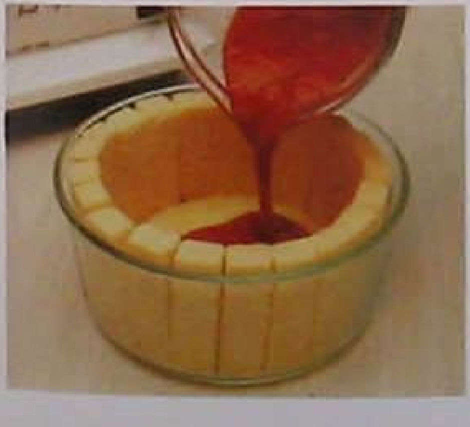
SERVES 4

How to microwave Autumn plum pudding

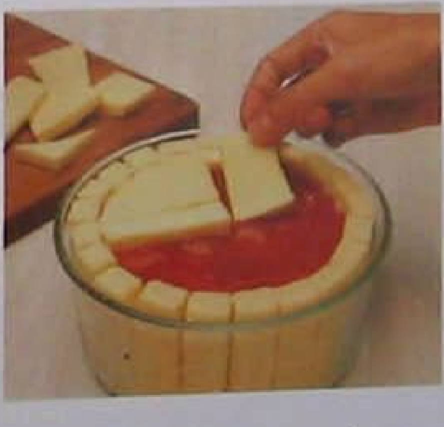


Trim *any brown crusts from the cake. Cut the cake in fingers, 12mm / ½in thick, and use to line the base and sides of a 1L / 1¾pt soufflé dish. Keep the edges close together.*

Place *the plums in a dish with the orange zest and juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, or until tender and juicy. Stir in the sugar and allow to cool.*



Purée *the plums in a blender until smooth. Pour a quarter of the purée into the lined dish. Add a layer of sponge, using up the offcuts and trimmings from the lining.*



Continue, *adding two more layers each of purée and cake, reserving the last quarter of the purée. Press the final sponge layer down firmly and refrigerate the pudding overnight.*

Turn *the chilled pudding out on to a serving dish. The juices should have seeped through the base and sides. Pour the remaining purée on top. Slice and serve with cream.*

Cherry ring cake

4½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1 Chocolate whisked sponge cake (see variation to Whisked sponge cake, page 1025)
375g / 13oz can cherry pie filling*
150ml / ¼pt whipped cream

SERVES 6

1 Prepare the chocolate sponge according to the recipe and variation. Allow to cool.
2 Cut a round from the centre of the cake (see steps, page 1025) and reserve for use in one of the other recipes.
3 Place the remaining ring on a serving dish and spoon the pie filling over the top.
4 Spoon whipped cream into the centre and chill for 1-2 hours.

VARIATION

Cherry liqueur ring: prick cake all over and sprinkle with 30ml / 2tbls each of kirsch and water.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use 9oz / 248g can cherries, drained and stoned. Thicken juice with 15ml / 3tsp arrowroot.

Increasing a recipe

If you want to increase the quantities in a microwave recipe just follow the simple guidelines given here. With a little know-how it is easy to convert a favourite family dish to cater for extra guests.

As you become more familiar with the way a microwave cooker works, you will be able to use it to help out on all kinds of occasions. Just as it can help you to make a family meal in only a few minutes, it can be invaluable when preparing a dinner party.

If you have a favourite recipe which your family enjoys, you can increase the quantities if you have guests. In the same way that there are guidelines for reducing a microwave recipe (see Part 16, page 418) there are rules for increasing a recipe to feed more people.

When increasing the quantity of food placed in the microwave cooker beyond that stated in the recipe, it is important to increase the microwaving time. The microwave cooker will still operate at the same power, therefore, the greater the amount of food, the longer it will take to cook.

Many microwave recipes are planned for four, or four to six people. Others are for one person only. If you want to double the quantity, or increase it by a third, simply follow the Guidelines given on page 1030.

Chunky Broth

Guidelines for increasing microwave recipes

- *To double a recipe, simply double the quantity of each ingredient specified in the recipe. To convert a recipe designed for four to cater for six, increase each ingredient by half as much again.*
- *Microwave for approximately one quarter extra cooking time when increasing a recipe from four to six. Allow between one third and one half extra cooking time when doubling.*
- *Place the food in a proportionately larger dish, making sure the dish is deep enough to prevent the ingredients boiling over the sides during microwaving.*
- *Cover the food and turn and stir as frequently as directed in the original recipe.*
- *Leave to stand for a few minutes longer than the standing time in the original recipe.*
- *Watch the factors which affect the timing, such as the starting temperature of the food and high fat or sugar content. Always test or check a dish after the minimum calculated cooking time — it is much easier to pop an undercooked dish back into the microwave for a few extra seconds than to remedy overcooked food.*

Chunky broth for 4-6

10 mins

Standing time: none

Leftover rice combines with two other convenience ingredients to make this warming broth.

2 × 411g / 14½oz cans beef consommé
225g / 8oz frozen mixed vegetables
100g / 4oz cooked long-grain rice

1 Put the consommé and vegetables into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.

2 Stir in the cooked rice, re-cover and microwave for 5 minutes at 100% (High) until piping hot but not boiling. Stir twice.

Chunky broth for 6-8

12½ mins

Standing time: none

3 × 411g / 14½oz cans beef consommé
350g / 12oz frozen mixed vegetables
175g / 6oz cooked long-grain rice

1 Put the consommé and vegetables in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring twice.

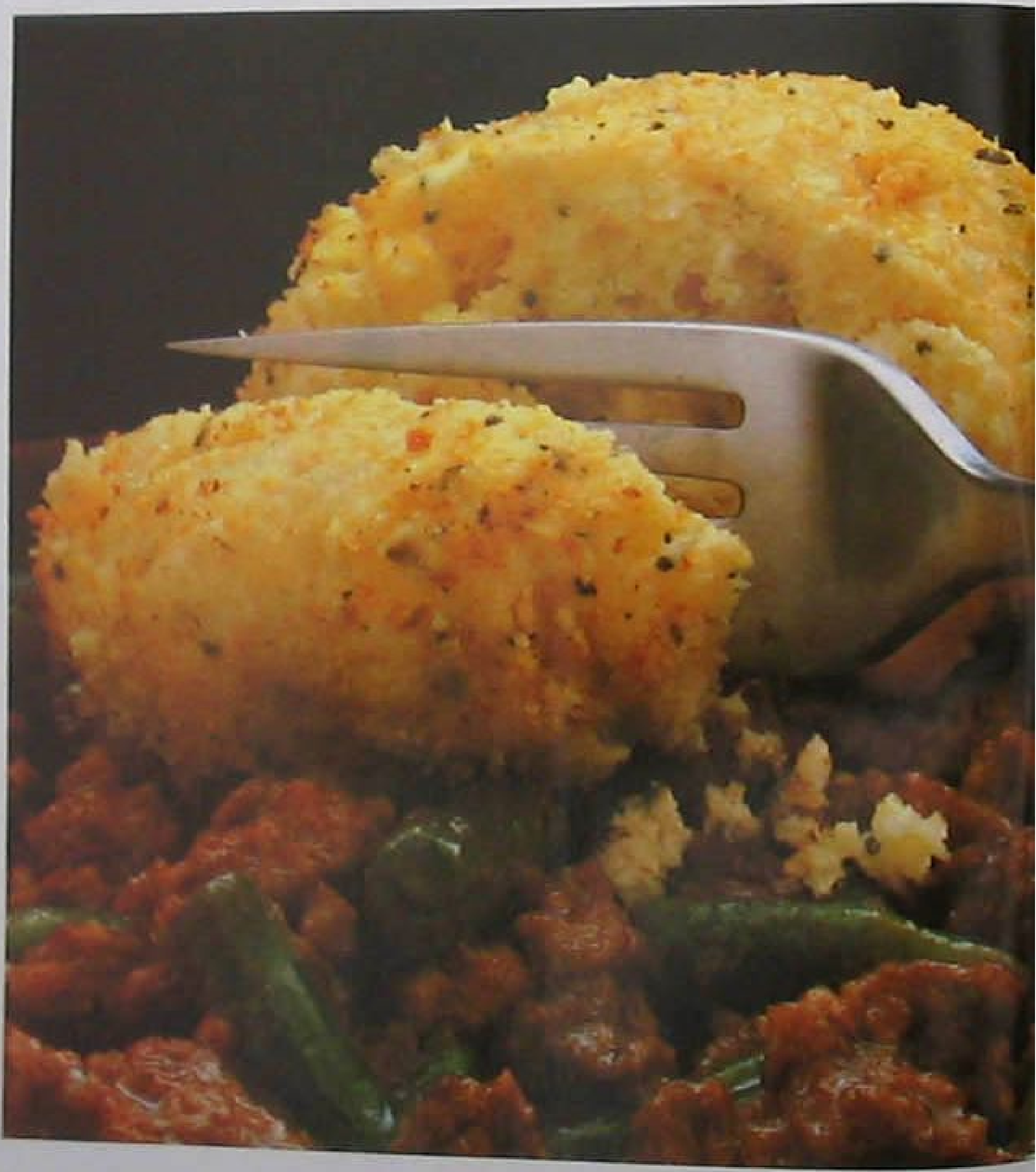
2 Stir in the cooked rice, re-cover and microwave for a further 6½-7 minutes until piping hot but not boiling. Stir twice.

Cook's notes

If you do not have any leftover cooked rice, boil roughly a third to a half the quantity of raw rice; this will give the correct amount of cooked rice needed.

Slimmer's notes

With or without the rice, Chunky Broth is low in calories. To serve four or six it has Cals 95 / kJ 400 with rice or Cals 65 / kJ 275 per serving without.



Beef with dumplings for 4

19 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

A warming casserole of beef topped with hearty dumplings is always a favourite with the family. If you have unexpected guests, this is a recipe you can easily increase from your freezer and storecupboard. Follow the step by step instructions below for both quantities — timings and dish sizes for Beef with dumplings for 6 are in the brackets.

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
48g / 2oz packet vegetable soup mix
425ml / ¾pt hot water
225g / 8oz frozen cut green beans

DUMPLINGS
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
50g / 2oz shredded suet, or cooking margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp poppy seeds
1.5ml / ¼tsp caraway seeds
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
60-75ml / 4-5tbls cold water
25g / 1oz fresh brown breadcrumbs

Beef with dumplings for 6

23½ mins

Standing time: 18 mins

700g / 1½lb lean minced beef
1½ × 48g / 2oz packet vegetable soup mix
625ml / 22fl oz hot water
350g / 12oz frozen cut green beans

DUMPLINGS
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
75g / 3oz shredded suet, or cooking margarine
3.5ml / ¾tsp poppy seeds
2.5ml / ½tsp caraway seeds
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
105-120ml / 7-8tbls cold water
90ml / 6tbls fresh brown breadcrumbs

VARIATION
Use fresh green beans, if available.

Cook's notes

Make casserole up to three days ahead and store in the refrigerator. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 or 5 minutes, stir, add dumplings and microwave for 5 or 6 minutes.

How to microwave Beef with dumplings for 4 and 6

Microwave *the beef in a 2.3L / 4pt (2.8L / 5pt) covered casserole at 100% (High) for 4 minutes (5 minutes), until no longer pink, stirring once. Stir the meat, then stir in the soup mix.*

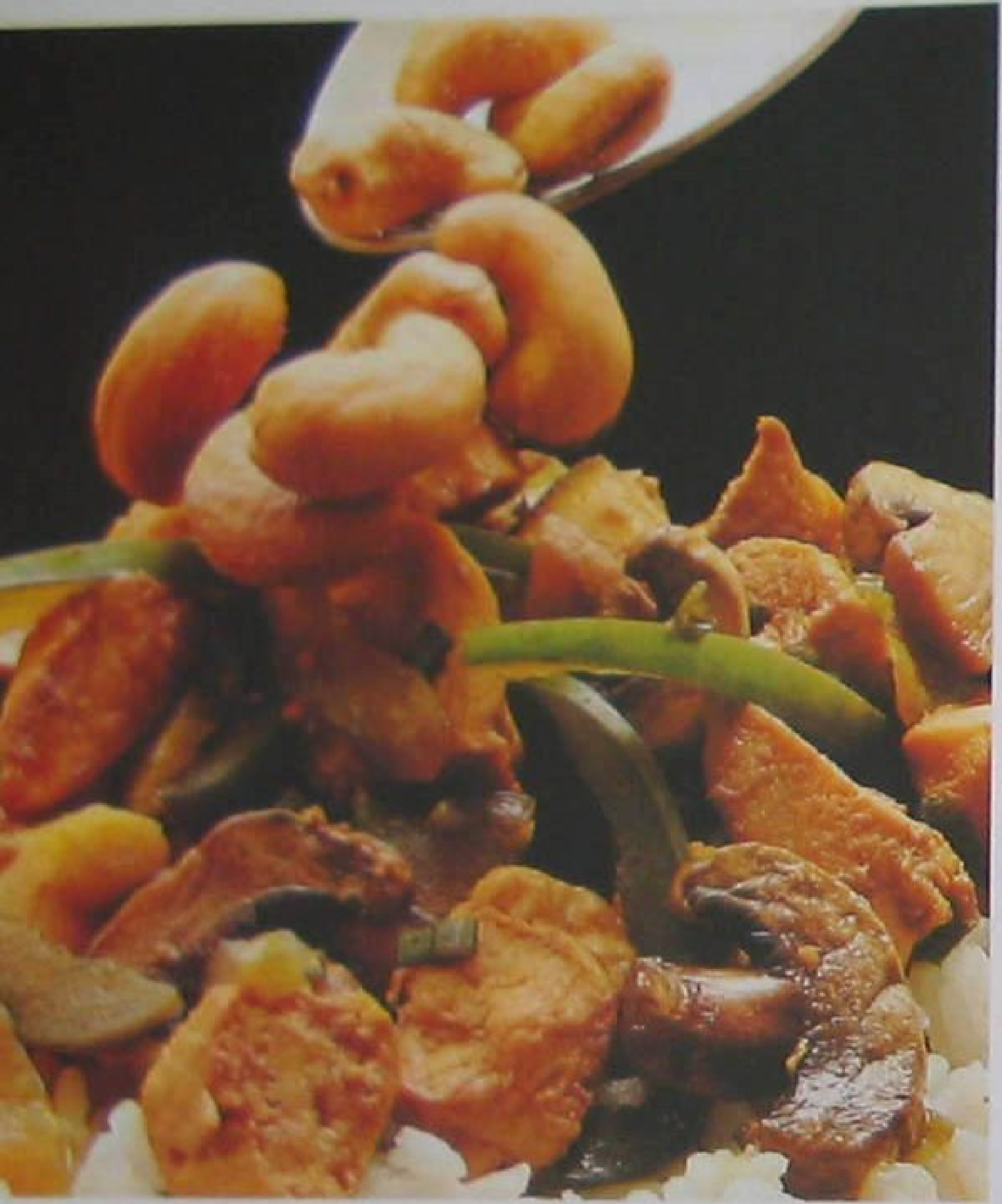
Mix *in the water, and set aside. Pierce the frozen bean packet or empty into a bowl and cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes (2½-3 minutes). Stir them into the beef.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes (10-11 minutes) or until the beans are tender and the sauce thickened, stirring twice. Stand for 10 minutes (12 minutes).*

Mix together, *in a large bowl, the flour, suet, poppy and caraway seeds and oregano for the dumplings. Gradually add enough water to form a soft dough.*

Divide *into four (six) equal-sized balls and roll each one in the fresh brown breadcrumbs, until evenly coated. Arrange the dumplings around the outside of the casserole.*

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes (6 minutes) or until the dumplings are firm to the touch, rotating the dish a quarter turn twice. Stand for 5 minutes (6 minutes).*



Chicken Chop Suey

Chicken chop suey for 6

9
mins

Standing time: 4 mins

67.5ml / 4½tbls soy sauce
45ml / 9tsp cornflour
22.5ml / 1½tbls sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
700g / 1½lb cooked, cubed chicken
1 large green pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
3 celery stalks, sliced diagonally
6 spring onions, thinly sliced
1½ chicken stock cubes, crumbled
200ml / 7fl oz water
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
3ml / ¾tsp oyster sauce
75g / 3oz cashew nuts, to garnish

1 Mix together the soy sauce, cornflour, sugar and ginger. Add the chicken and toss to coat.
2 Combine pepper, celery, onions, stock cube and water, cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes. Stand for 4 minutes.
3 Add the chicken mixture and mushrooms and oyster sauce.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6½-7½ minutes, until well heated through. Stir once.
5 Garnish with the cashew nuts.

Chicken chop suey for 4

6½
mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Oyster sauce is now available from large supermarkets.

45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
450g / 1lb cooked, cubed chicken
1 green pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
2 celery stalks, sliced diagonally
4 spring onions, thinly sliced
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
150ml / ¼pt water
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
2.5ml / ½tsp oyster sauce
50g / 2oz cashew nuts, to garnish

1 Mix together the soy sauce, cornflour, sugar and ginger. Add the chicken and toss to coat.
2 Combine the green pepper, celery, onions, stock cube and water in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Stand for 3 minutes.
3 Add the chicken mixture and the mushrooms and oyster sauce.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, until well heated through and the mushrooms are tender. Stir once.
5 Serve over boiled rice and garnish with cashew nuts.

VARIATION
Any lean leftover meat can be used in this chop suey.

Fruity sponge pudding for 4-6

12½
mins

Standing time: 8½ mins

1-2 digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
397g / 14oz can fruit filling*
100g / 4oz butter, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
few drops of vanilla flavouring
100g / 4oz self-raising wholewheat flour
30ml / 2tbls milk

CUSTARD
22.5ml / 4½tsp custard powder
15ml / 3tsp sugar
425ml / ¾pt cold milk

1 Grease the base and sides of a

1.1L / 2pt bowl and coat with biscuit crumbs. Spoon 45ml / 3tbls fruit filling into the bottom.

2 Cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat the eggs with the vanilla flavouring, then gradually beat into the creamed mixture. Sift and fold in flour, then stir in the milk.

3 Spoon carefully into bowl and spread evenly. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 8 minutes, rotating dish every 2 minutes.

4 The pudding is cooked when a cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then turn out.

5 Place remaining fruit filling in a bowl, cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute. Stand, covered, for 3½ minutes.

6 Put the custard powder and sugar into a 1.1L / 2pt jug. Blend the milk in carefully.

7 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, stirring once. Spoon extra filling around sponge, serve with custard.

Fruity sponge pudding for 6-8

16½ mins

Standing time: 11 mins

2-3 digestive biscuits or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
397g / 14oz can fruit filling*
175g / 6oz butter, softened
175g / 6oz caster sugar
3 eggs, beaten
few drops of vanilla flavouring
175g / 6oz self-raising wholewheat flour
45ml / 3tbls milk

CUSTARD
30ml / 6tsp custard powder
15-30ml / 3-6tsp sugar
575ml / 1pt cold milk

1 Grease base and sides of a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl and coat with biscuit crumbs. Spoon 60ml / 4tbls fruit filling into bottom.

2 Cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat the eggs with the vanilla flavouring, then gradually beat into the creamed butter mixture. Sift and fold in flour; stir in milk.

3 Spoon carefully into bowl and spread evenly. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 10 minutes, rotating dish every 2½ minutes.

4 The pudding is cooked when a cocktail stick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to stand for 6 minutes, then turn out.

5 Place the remaining fruit filling in a bowl, cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

6 Put the custard powder and sugar into a 1.1L/2pt jug. Blend the milk in carefully.

7 Microwave, uncovered at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring twice. Spoon extra filling around sponge, serve with custard.

Fruity Sponge Pudding

PAUL WEBSTER

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Canned fruit, drained and mashed.

Chocolate rose gateau

Spoil your family and friends with this mouthwatering chocolate gateau. It looks ambitious but is made in minutes in the microwave. Even the chocolate leaves are easy when you know how.

This moist, dark chocolate gateau is surprisingly easy to make. All the ingredients for the cake batter are mixed together in one bowl (take care not to over-mix the cake batter, or your cake will be tough). Tangy soured cream and chocolate frosting takes only seconds to make.

The chocolate leaf decorations are very effective and, with delicate handling are really not difficult to produce. Use plain or cooking chocolate to make the frosting and leaves — milk chocolate will not give the same dark, glossy colour or rich flavour. Take care not to overheat the chocolate or stir it too vigorously or it may stiffen and lose its gloss.

When you come to finish the leaf decoration, peel the rose leaf away from the chocolate, not the other way round. Treat the fragile leaves gently and work quickly.

It's not a good idea to make the frosting too far in advance, or the cream may suffer. For the same reason, refrigerate the gateau until you are ready to serve it.

Chocolate rose gateau

14¾ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

150g / 5oz self-raising flour
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
100g / 4oz cocoa powder
150g / 5oz butter or margarine
75g / 3oz caster sugar
75g / 3oz dark soft brown sugar
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
10ml / 2tsp vanilla flavouring
75ml / 5tbls milk

FROSTING
150g / 5oz plain chocolate
150ml / 5fl oz soured cream

CHOCOLATE LEAVES
50g / 2oz plain chocolate
knob of butter
12 medium-sized rose leaves
6 glacé cherries, halved

SERVES 8-10

1 Line the base of a deep 22-23cm / 8½-9in diameter cake or soufflé dish with greased greaseproof paper. Sift together the flour, baking powder and cocoa powder; reserve.

2 Place the butter or margarine in a large bowl. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 10-15 seconds until softened. Add the remaining cake ingredients and stir until blended. Gradually stir in the flour mixture.

3 Pour mixture into prepared dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes, or until the surface is just set. Leave to stand for 10 minutes, then turn out on to a cooling rack, remove paper and leave until cold.

4 Make the frosting: break the chocolate into squares and place in a bowl. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring gently twice, until melted and glossy. Remove from the cooker and slowly stir in the soured cream, one third at a time. Leave for 10 minutes to cool.

5 Using a palette knife, swirl the frosting over the sides and top of the cake. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, or until the frosting is firm.

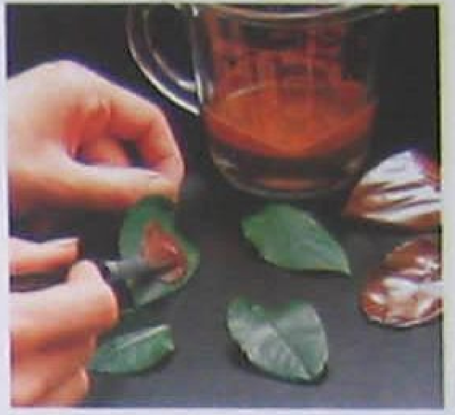
6 Make the chocolate leaves (see steps, right) and then decorate gateau with leaves and glacé cherries.

VARIATIONS
Use almond flavouring instead of vanilla.

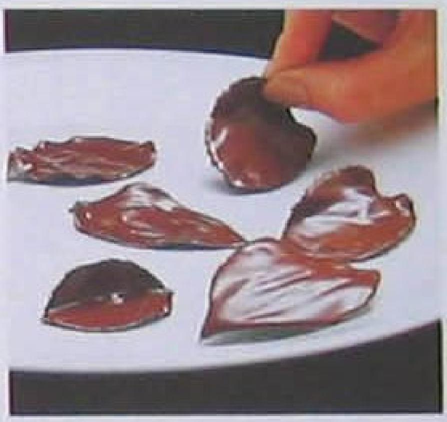
Cook's notes

Make sure you don't use rose leaves that have been treated with garden chemicals within the last 14 days. If these are not available, cut out leaf shapes from non-stick baking paper. The chocolate leaves will not have veins, but will still look effective.

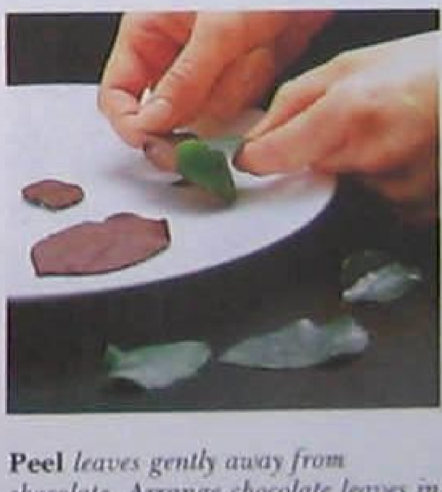
How to make Chocolate leaves



Break *up chocolate and place with butter in a jug or small bowl. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once. Brush over top of rose leaves.*



Place *coated leaves carefully on a large freezer-proof plate, spreading them out so they don't touch each other. Freeze for about 30 minutes until the chocolate has set firm.*



Peel *leaves gently away from chocolate. Arrange chocolate leaves in pairs, vein side up, on top of gateau, with a halved glacé cherry at the base of each pair. Chill until ready to serve.*

Batch cooking: meatballs

In casseroles, soups or sauces, with vegetables or rice, meatballs are deliciously versatile. Keep batches in the freezer ready to dress up just as you please to make all sorts of meals.

Use your freezer/microwave combination to best advantage and make up a batch of meatballs. Freeze them ready to thaw and then heat in tempting dishes whenever you want, or eat straight after cooking, served in a sauce or casserole (see Microtips, page 1038).

Use only lean beef for making meatballs or they will shrink as the fat melts during cooking. Wholewheat breadcrumbs add extra fibre and flavour to the meatballs, or you could use rolled oats or bran for variation. Basic meatballs can be more highly seasoned with spices or herbs, if liked.

Shape the meat mixture into 2.5-4cm / 1-1½in balls for most main dishes. Smaller meatballs are good for parties, served hot on sticks to dunk in a spicy sauce. Sprinkle flour over your hands and work surface for shaping the meatballs to prevent sticking.

Freezing

Drain the meatballs well before arranging on trays covered with cling film or freezer tissue. It is

Italian Meatballs

Sweet 'n' Sour Meatballs

best to open-freeze meatballs for several hours before packing in rigid containers to ensure that they retain their shape. Freeze no longer than 2 months.

Thawing and serving

Meatballs can be used in recipes straight from frozen, thawed or thawed and heated. Just add one container of meatballs to a hot sauce and microwave at 100% (High) for the times given on page 1038, stirring once or twice. The longer the meatballs are allowed to cook in a sauce, however, the more flavour they will absorb.

Italian meatballs

6 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Thawing time: 4 mins

Serve this dish with spaghetti.

425g / 15oz Italian-style tomato sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
large pinch of garlic salt
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps, page 1038)
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan

SERVES 4

How to microwave Italian meatballs

Place *tomato sauce, basil, oregano, salt and parsley in a measuring jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until bubbling hot. Place meatballs in a dish; add sauce.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until heated through, turning the meatballs twice. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese if liked, and leave to stand for 2-3 minutes.*

Sweet 'n' sour meatballs

5 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 4 mins

75ml / 5tbls cider vinegar
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
376g / 13.3oz can crushed pineapple
30ml / 2tbls fruit chutney
1 small green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps, page 1038)

SERVES 4

1 Put the vinegar in a large bowl and whisk in the cornflour. Stir in the pineapple, chutney, green pepper, sugar and ginger. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring three or four times until thickened and bubbling.

2 Add the thawed meatballs, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until heated. Let stand 3-5 minutes.

Microtips

Meatballs microwaved without a sauce are best thawed and heated at 70% (Medium-High) to keep them moist. They can be microwaved at 100% (High) in a sauce or soup.

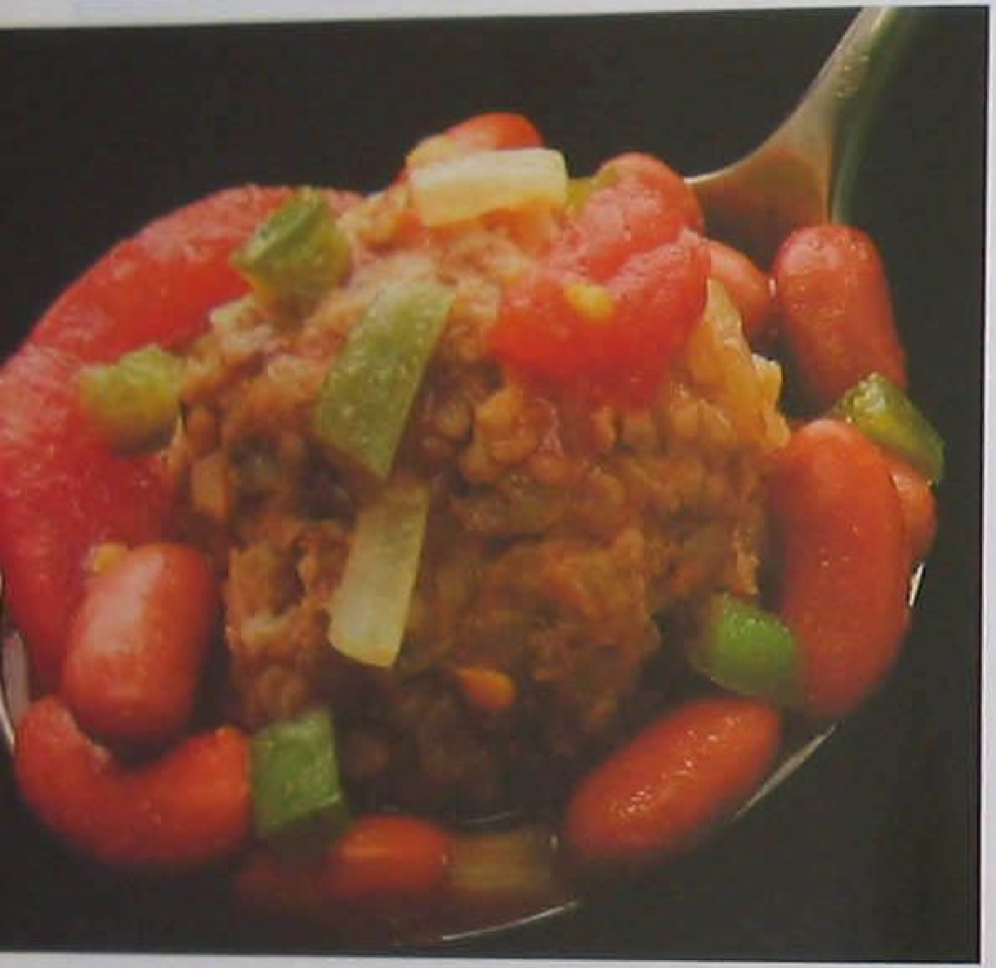
Heating meatballs

*Times at 100% (High) for 1 container meatballs added to a hot sauce

Stage	Microwave time*
Frozen	6-8 mins
Thawed	3-4 mins
Thawed and heated	15-60 secs

Microtips

To serve Basic meatballs straight away, prepare a sauce such as Brown Sauce in Part 23, page 615. Omit the mushrooms and microwave butter for 15-30 seconds before adding flour. Stir meatballs into sauce; microwave 1-2 minutes.



Meatballs with kidney beans

10 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 4 mins

This is excellent for a party supper using small-sized meatballs.

½ green pepper, chopped
½ small onion, finely chopped
10ml / 2tsp olive oil
432g / 15.2oz can kidney beans, drained
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
6-7 drops Tabasco sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
75ml / 5tbls beef stock

Meatballs with Kidney Beans

salt and pepper
1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps, right)

SERVES 4

1 Put the pepper, onion and oil into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once.

2 Stir in the beans, tomatoes Tabasco, sugar, stock and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.

3 Add the thawed meatballs, cover and continue to microwave for 3-4 minutes until the meatballs are hot. Let stand for 3-5 minutes.

Basic meatballs

10 mins

Standing time: 6 mins

Thawing and heating: 8 mins

900g / 2lb lean minced beef
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
1 onion, minced
2 eggs, beaten
2 garlic cloves, crushed (optional)
10ml / 2tsp bottled brown sauce
salt and pepper

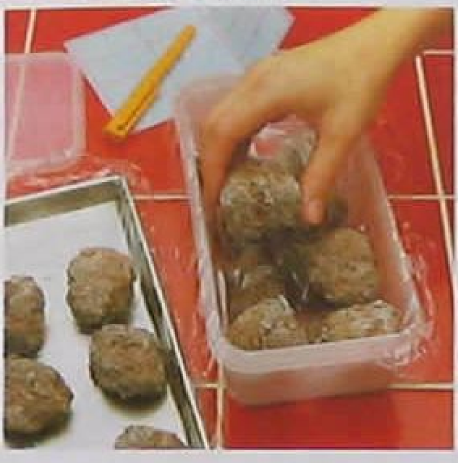
MAKES 2 BATCHES

How to microwave Basic meatballs

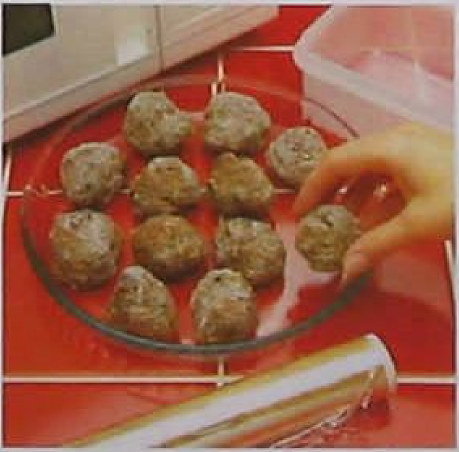
Combine *all the ingredients, breaking up the mince and mixing well. Shape into 16-24 balls. Arrange half the meatballs in a 23cm / 9in round dish or 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish.*

Microwave *each dish, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until meatballs are firm to touch, rotating dish quarter turn three or four times and rearranging the meatballs once. Leave to stand for 3-4 minutes.*

How to freeze and thaw meatballs



To freeze: *drain cooked meatballs on absorbent paper, cover and chill. When cold, arrange on covered trays. Freeze 4-5 hours until firm. Pack in two containers and freeze up to two months.*



RAY DUNS

To thaw: *arrange meatballs from one container in a dish. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 4-5 minutes, rearranging twice. To serve: microwave a further 4-5 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes.*

Meatballs with rice

9 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 4 mins

A can of soup makes the base for a deliciously speedy sauce for meatballs — leave the dish to stand after cooking to allow the rice and meatballs to absorb the flavourful juices.

1 onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
75ml / 3fl oz hot water
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
290g / 10.2oz can cream of mushroom soup
275g / 10oz cooked long-grain rice
1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps left)
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion, celery, mushrooms and 30ml / 2tbls water into a dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until the vegetables are tender, stirring after half the time.

2 Mix in the remaining water, sauce, soup, rice and meatballs; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until heated through, stirring twice. Season to taste with salt and pepper then allow to stand for 3-5 minutes before serving with a green salad.

Above: *Meatballs with Rice*
Right: *Simmered Meatballs*

Simmered meatballs

7 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

Thawing time: 4 mins

1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps, opposite)

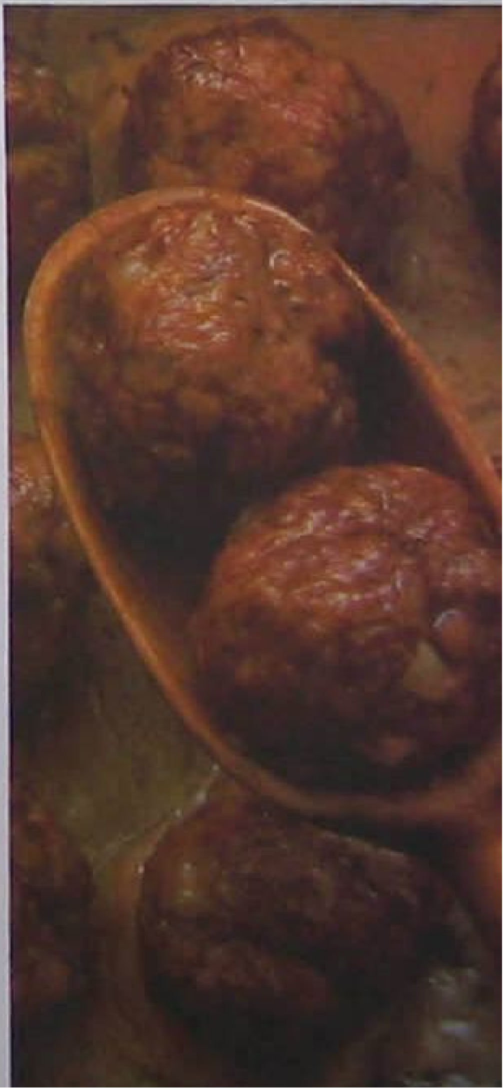
SAUCE

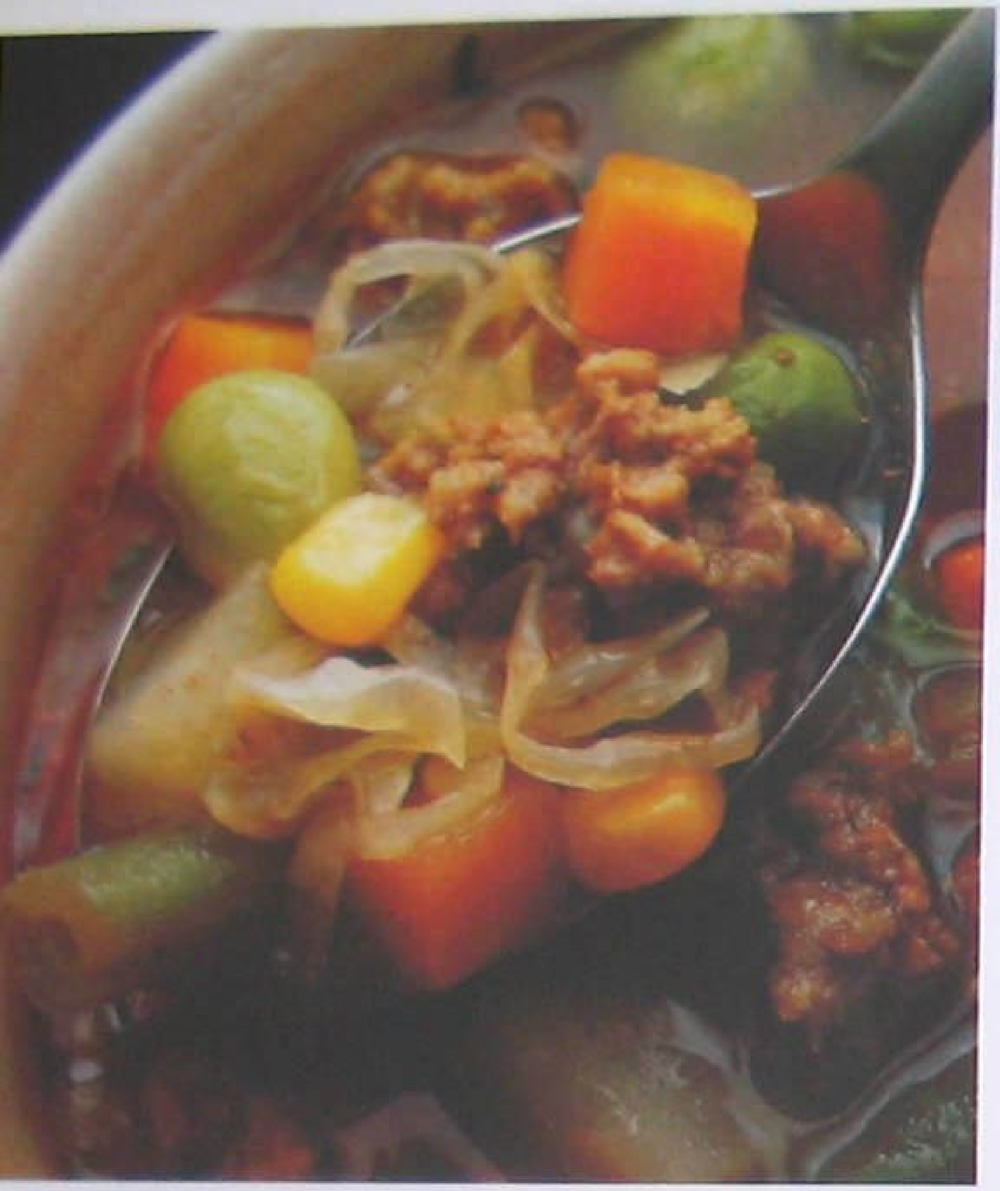
150ml / ¼pt hot water
½ beef stock cube, crumbled
75ml / 5tbls sherry
22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour
10ml / 2tsp finely chopped onion
1.5ml / ¼tsp bottled brown sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine the hot water, stock cube and sherry in a bowl. Whisk in the flour, then add the onion, sauce and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes; whisk every minute to thicken.

2 Place the thawed meatballs in a dish and pour over the hot sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, turning twice. Let stand for 3-4 minutes.





Meatball vegetable soup

27 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

100-150g / 4-5oz potato, cut into 6mm / ¼in cubes
175g / 6oz green or white cabbage, shredded
½ onion, minced or grated
850ml / 1½pt hot water
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
1 container frozen Basic meatballs (see page 1038)
275g / 10oz packet frozen mixed vegetables
15ml / 1tbls dried parsley
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the potato, cabbage, onion, hot water, stock cube and tomatoes into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes until boiling, stirring once.

2 Add the frozen meatballs, vegetables, parsley, sauce, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-23 minutes until the cabbage and potato are tender, stirring two or three times. Leave to stand for 3-5 minutes.

Cook's notes

Smaller meatballs are best for this recipe, but if you have only made up and frozen the larger ones, use these and cut in half before serving. This recipe makes a substantial warming meal served with hot rolls.

Meatballs with white sauce

7¾ mins

Standing time: none

Thawing time: 4 mins

Serve the meatballs and sauce separately, so the sauce retains its natural creamy colour and can be poured over individual portions.

1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps, page 1038)

SAUCE
225ml / 8fl oz milk
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
10ml / 2tsp minced onion
1 bay leaf
25g / 1oz butter
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Left: *Meatball Vegetable Soup*
Below: *Meatballs with White Sauce*
Right: *Meatballs on Vegetables*

1 For the sauce, place milk in a bowl, whisk in flour and add other sauce ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking every minute until thickened. Check seasoning and remove bay leaf.
2 Arrange the meatballs in a circle on a flat dish; microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until hot, turning once. Reheat sauce at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds if necessary and serve separately.

VARIATION
Stir 15-30ml / 1-2tbls fresh or soured cream into the hot sauce.

Microtips

The sauce can be made in advance. Leave to cool with cling film on the surface to prevent a skin forming. Reheat, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, whisking two or three times.

Meatballs on vegetables

11 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

Thawing time: 4 mins

225g / 8oz carrots, thinly sliced
225-275g / 8-10oz potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
150ml / ¼pt water
10ml / 2tsp dried parsley
salt and pepper
1 container Basic meatballs, thawed (see steps, page 1038)

SERVES 4

1 Put all the ingredients, except the meatballs in a dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, stirring twice.
2 Arrange meatballs on top; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, turning twice. Stand 3-5 minutes.

Cook's notes

To serve Meatballs on Vegetables as a sustaining family meal, accompany with crisply-cooked broccoli or sprouts, and make up extra gravy to serve as a sauce.

Microwaving crab

Crab has a deliciously subtle flavour that gives a taste of luxury to all sorts of recipes. Whether in a starring role or used to complement other food, it turns a meal into a feast.

Of all shellfish, crab is perhaps the most versatile — and also arguably the most tasty. Though superb cold in salads and sandwiches, it can also be served in a range of hot dishes, in soups, in a simple sauce or used to stuff vegetables or fish.

Cooked fresh crabs are available all year round from fishmongers and increasingly from fish counters in supermarkets. A crab can weigh up to 3.6kg / 8lb, but the most widely sold and the tastiest are the smaller ones, weighing 400-700g / 14oz-1½lb each. This will provide between 100-225g / 4-8oz crabmeat, depending on how handy you are with pliers and skewer!

Test for freshness by holding it and shaking it gently. The crab should have a pleasant smell, feel heavy for its size with no sound of water or loose meat inside.

Most of the meat in a crab is in the shell itself and in the two large claws. Flesh from the claws and

Crab Creole

PAUL WEBSTER

legs is customarily removed using a lobster cracker (similar to a nut cracker) and a long thin lobster pick. However pliers, a hammer or a rolling pin and a long skewer work equally well. There is also a technique for breaking into the shell (see steps, right). Always discard the grey gills (dead man's fingers) from under the body as these are inedible.

Since the crab is already cooked, hot dishes need only be microwaved for a few minutes. This will heat the food, without overcooking it and ruining the flavour.

Crab creole

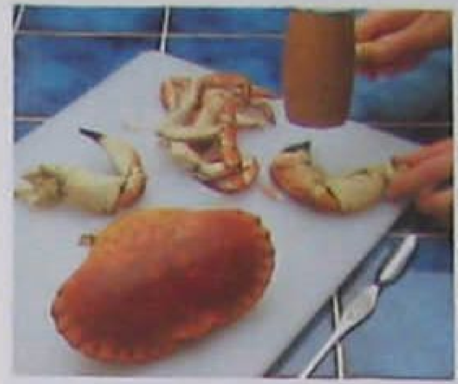
7¾ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

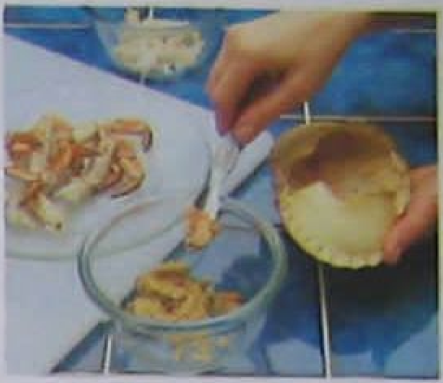
4 × 700g / 1½lb fresh cooked crabs, prepared, shells reserved
25g / 1oz butter
½ small onion, chopped
25g / 1oz mushrooms, sliced
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
125ml / 4fl oz dry white wine
pinch of saffron
1.5ml / ¼tsp curry paste
30ml / 2tbls chilli relish
½ × 200g / 7oz can pimientos, drained and sliced
45ml / 3tbls double cream
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese
flat-leaf parsley, to garnish

SERVES 4

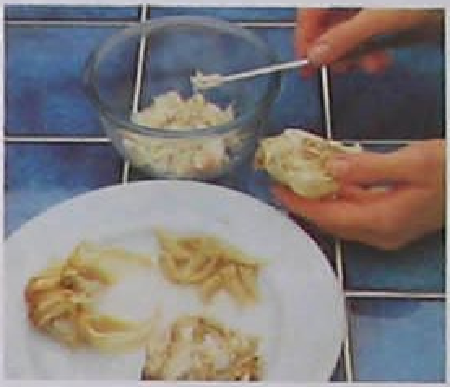
How to prepare Fresh crab



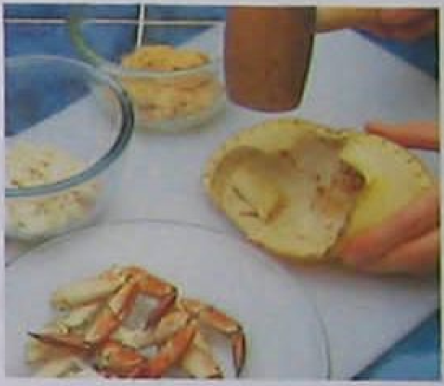
Place *cooked crab on board; twist off legs and claws. Crack with hammer or rolling pin. Remove flesh; use a skewer to remove meat from crevices and legs. Reserve small legs for decoration. Place meat in bowl.*



Turn *the crab on its back. Hold tail and gently pull away body and tail from outer shell. Discard mouth and stomach sac. Scrape out brown meat and any coral from inside shell; place in separate bowl.*



Pull off *and discard the grey gills (dead man's fingers) from body of crab. Cut body in two, scoop out white meat from leg sockets and central sections with skewer.*



Using *a hammer or rolling pin, gently tap out the thin ridge of shell back to natural dark line near scalloped edge. Wash and dry shell thoroughly for using in recipe.*

How to microwave Crab creole

Microwave *butter in covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Add onion and mushrooms, cover and microwave for a further 2 minutes, stirring once. Stir in flour; blend in wine until smooth.*

Add *saffron, curry paste and chilli relish; microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until thickened; stir once. Add pimientos and cream; season. Divide brown and white crabmeat between shells. Grate cheese.*

Cover *crabmeat with sauce; sprinkle over cheese. Arrange on a dish; microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, until bubbling and hot. Cover loosely with foil, stand for 3 minutes. Garnish with crab legs and parsley.*

Seafood bisque

7
mins

Standing time: none

299g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of smoked salmon soup or crab bisque
150ml / ¼pt single cream
30ml / 2tbls brandy or sherry
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
175g / 6oz crabmeat (see Cook's note, page 1045), lightly flaked
mustard* and cress, to garnish

SERVES 4-6

1 Make up soup with water, following directions on can.
2 Stir in single cream, brandy or sherry, tomato purée, seasoning and lemon juice.
3 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes until just warm, stirring gently once or twice.
4 Stir in crabmeat, cover and microwave for a further 3 minutes.
5 Serve the bisque immediately, garnished with mustard and cress.

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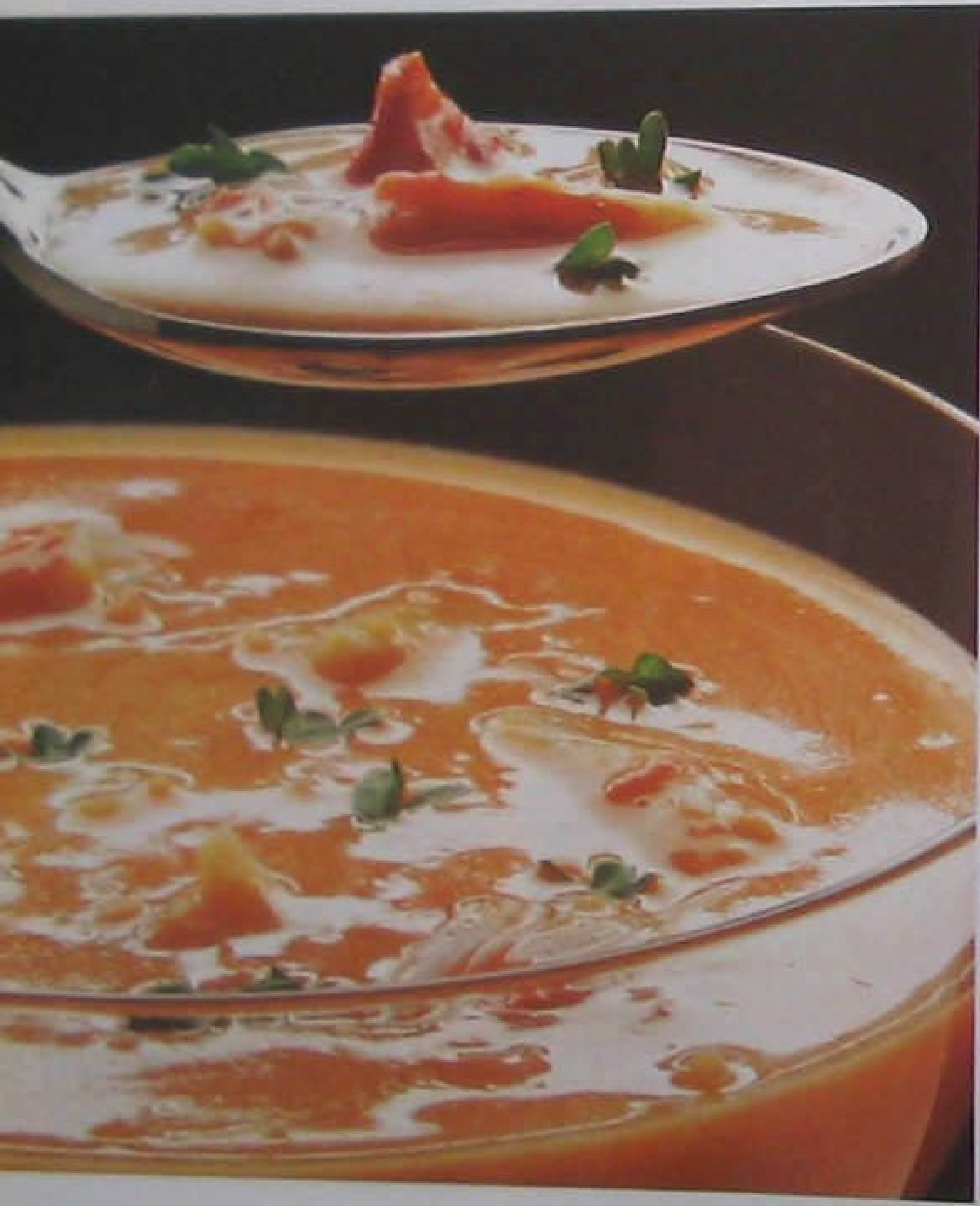
*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Leaf mustard

Freezer notes

To thaw 225g / 8oz crabmeat, remove from container but leave in polythene wrapping. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3½-4 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes. Flake lightly before using.

Seafood Bisque



Crab-stuffed tomatoes

3½
mins

Standing time: none

These make a tasty and simple starter. Prepare ahead and heat through (see step 5) before serving. Or serve cold — they are delicious either way.

2 spring onions, finely chopped
¼ small green pepper, chopped
5ml / 1tsp oil
170g / 6oz can crabmeat, drained and lightly flaked
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried dillweed
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
30ml / 2tbls mayonnaise
45ml / 3tbls dried breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
8 tomatoes

SERVES 4

1 Place onions, green pepper and oil in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stirring once, until vegetables have softened.
2 Stir in crabmeat, parsley, dill, lemon juice, mayonnaise, breadcrumbs and seasoning.
3 Cut a 6mm / ¼in slice from the top of each tomato. Chop this finely and add to crab mixture. Scoop out middle of tomatoes and season the insides with a little salt and pepper.
4 Fill scooped out tomatoes with crab mixture.
5 Arrange tomatoes in a circle on a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until heated through.

Microtips

To make the tomatoes more stable and prevent them from falling over during cooking, cut a very thin slice off the base before filling the centres with the crab mixture. Chop this finely and add to filling.

The insides of the scooped-out tomatoes can be reserved for use in another dish, such as stew or soup. Refrigerate the pulp and use it within two days.

Baked eggs with crab

5 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

175g / 6oz crabmeat, flaked
3 slices processed cheese
4 eggs
paprika

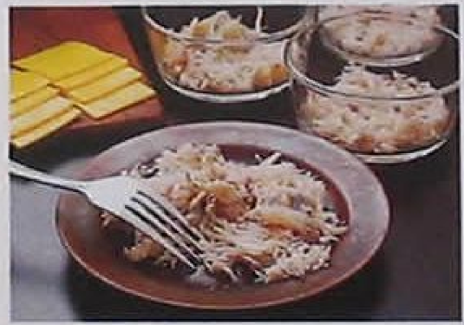
SERVES 4

Cook's notes

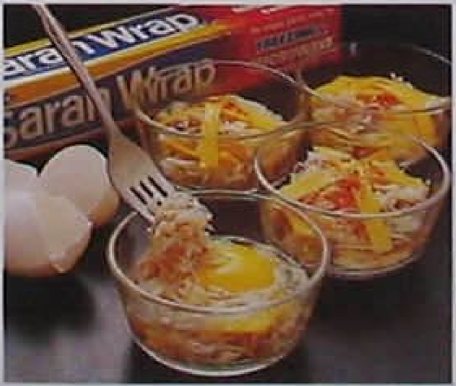
Although fresh crab is best, canned and frozen crab both make excellent and simple alternatives.

Some fishmongers sell crabmeat which has been prepared, returned to the shell, then frozen. Use this type if making Crab Creole, where the crab shell is required for serving.

How to microwave Baked eggs with crab



Reserve *one-quarter of flaked crabmeat. Divide rest between four lightly-oiled ramekins. Cut two cheese slices into four pieces; place two pieces in each dish.*



Break *an egg into each dish; sprinkle over reserved crabmeat. Cut third cheese slice into eight strips. Arrange on top of eggs. Sprinkle with paprika.*

Cover *dishes with cling film. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes for soft eggs or for 6-7 minutes if you prefer them more firmly cooked.*

Allow *to stand for 2-3 minutes, until eggs are soft or firmly set. Baked eggs with crab make a stylish starter or lunch. Serve with buttered brown bread.*

Crab-stuffed sole

17½
mins

Standing time: 5 mins

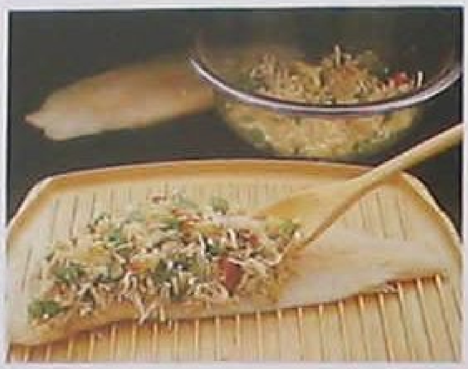
- ½ onion, chopped
- ½ green pepper, chopped
- 15ml / 1tbls olive oil
- 170g / 6oz can white crabmeat lightly flaked
- 30ml / 2tbls fresh breadcrumbs
- 10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
- 15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
- salt and pepper
- 2 sole or flounder fillets, about 225g / 8oz each, skinned
- 150ml / ¼pt tomato juice
- 1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
- 5ml / 1tsp chopped fresh basil or 1.5ml / ¼tsp dried
- 1.5ml / ¼tsp caster sugar
- 2-3 lemon slices, halved

SERVES 4

How to microwave Crab-stuffed sole

Mix *onion, pepper and oil in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, until tender, stirring once.*

Add *the crabmeat, breadcrumbs, chopped parsley, 5ml / 1tsp of the lemon juice and seasoning and stir to mix thoroughly.*



Arrange *one sole fillet on a microwave roasting rack. Spoon the crab mixture over the fish and place the second sole fillet on top.*

Mix *tomato juice, oregano, basil, remaining lemon juice, sugar and seasoning in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes until bubbling and slightly thickened.*

Spoon *a little of the sauce over the stuffed sole and top with lemon slices. Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes.*

Turn *dish and cook for a further 4-5 minutes, until sole flakes easily. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, reheat sauce for 1 minute. Slice fish and serve.*

Tempting tomato dishes

The superb flavour and colour of tomatoes makes them a popular and versatile ingredient in cooking. With the help of a microwave they provide delicious dishes in next-to-no-time.

Although the tomato is widely used as a vegetable it is, in fact, a fruit. There's no doubt about the usefulness of tomatoes in cooking — their superb flavour, colour and nutritional content make them a popular ingredient for all manner of tasty dishes — soups, stews, casseroles, sauces or purées.

Buy fresh tomatoes that are firm and bright red if you are using them the same day. If, however, they are not needed for a few days, select tomatoes that are a little under-ripe and keep them in a bowl in a cool position for up to 5 days — tomatoes tend to lose flavour when stored in the refrigerator.

Canned tomatoes are excellent value and extremely good in cooking for their richness of flavour and good strong colour. You may find in some cases — for example, the Rich Tomato Soup, page 1048 — that a mixture of both fresh and canned tomatoes helps give a delicious tomatoey result.

Tomato paste, sold in small

Rich Tomato Soup

PAUL WEBSTER

cans, bottles and tubes, is another useful store-cupboard standby for adding flavour and colour to all manner of dishes. Use this product sparingly, as the flavour is strong and may overpower other milder flavours. Bottled tomato sauce is also a useful ingredient and, although this is more often served as a condiment with fries, grills and burgers, it helps provide piquancy to savoury dishes.

Microtips

To skin tomatoes: *boil 700ml / 1¼pt water conventionally and pour into a bowl. Prick the tomatoes, place in water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until the skins have loosened. Using a slotted spoon, remove and plunge into cold water. Drain, then peel away the skins, which should slip off easily.*

Rich tomato soup

24
mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz smoked bacon, rinded and chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 onion, chopped
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
350g / 12oz ripe tomatoes, skinned and chopped
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp caster sugar
10ml / 2tsp paprika
salt to taste
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
150ml / ¼pt single cream
snipped chives, for sprinkling

SERVES 4

1 Put the bacon, celery, onion and oil in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.

2 Stir in the fresh and canned tomatoes, then re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 5 minutes, stirring once.

3 Add the remaining ingredients, except the cream and chives, then re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.

4 Purée in a blender or food processor, then sieve. Return to casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring once. Serve hot with a swirl of cream and a sprinkling of chives.

Ratatouille

11
mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, thinly sliced
1 small green pepper, seeded and cut in thin strips
½ aubergine, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes (see Cook's notes)
1 garlic clove, crushed
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
1 courgette, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices (see Cook's notes, below)
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
good pinch of sugar
salt and pepper to taste
3 tomatoes, skinned and cut into wedges

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion, green pepper, aubergine, garlic and oil in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes or until the onion has softened.

2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the tomatoes, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until almost tender, stirring once.

3 Mix in the tomatoes, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until tomatoes are heated through, but still holding their shape; stir gently after half the cooking time.

VARIATION

For additional flavour, add 30ml / 2tbls dry white wine to the mixture and use a 225g / 8oz can tomatoes (broken up slightly with a spoon) instead of fresh tomatoes.

Ratatouille

Cook's notes

Sprinkle the cubed aubergine and sliced courgette with salt and leave to stand in a colander for 30 minutes to 1 hour, to extract the bitter-flavoured juices. Before using, rinse the vegetables thoroughly in cold water and pat dry on absorbent paper.

Cheesy stuffed tomatoes

8
mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

These herby, cheese-topped tomatoes make a delicious light starter — arrange with some crisp lettuce leaves or a few sprigs of watercress.

4 large tomatoes
100g / 4oz mushrooms, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
60ml / 4tbls fine dry breadcrumbs
salt and pepper to taste
good pinch of dried thyme
1 egg, lightly beaten
100g / 4oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

How to microwave Cheesy stuffed tomatoes

Remove *stem ends of tomatoes and scoop out pulp and seeds. Place tomatoes in a large baking dish.*

Combine *the mushrooms, celery, onion and butter in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until celery is tender-crisp. Stir in breadcrumbs, seasoning, thyme, egg and two-thirds of the cheese.*

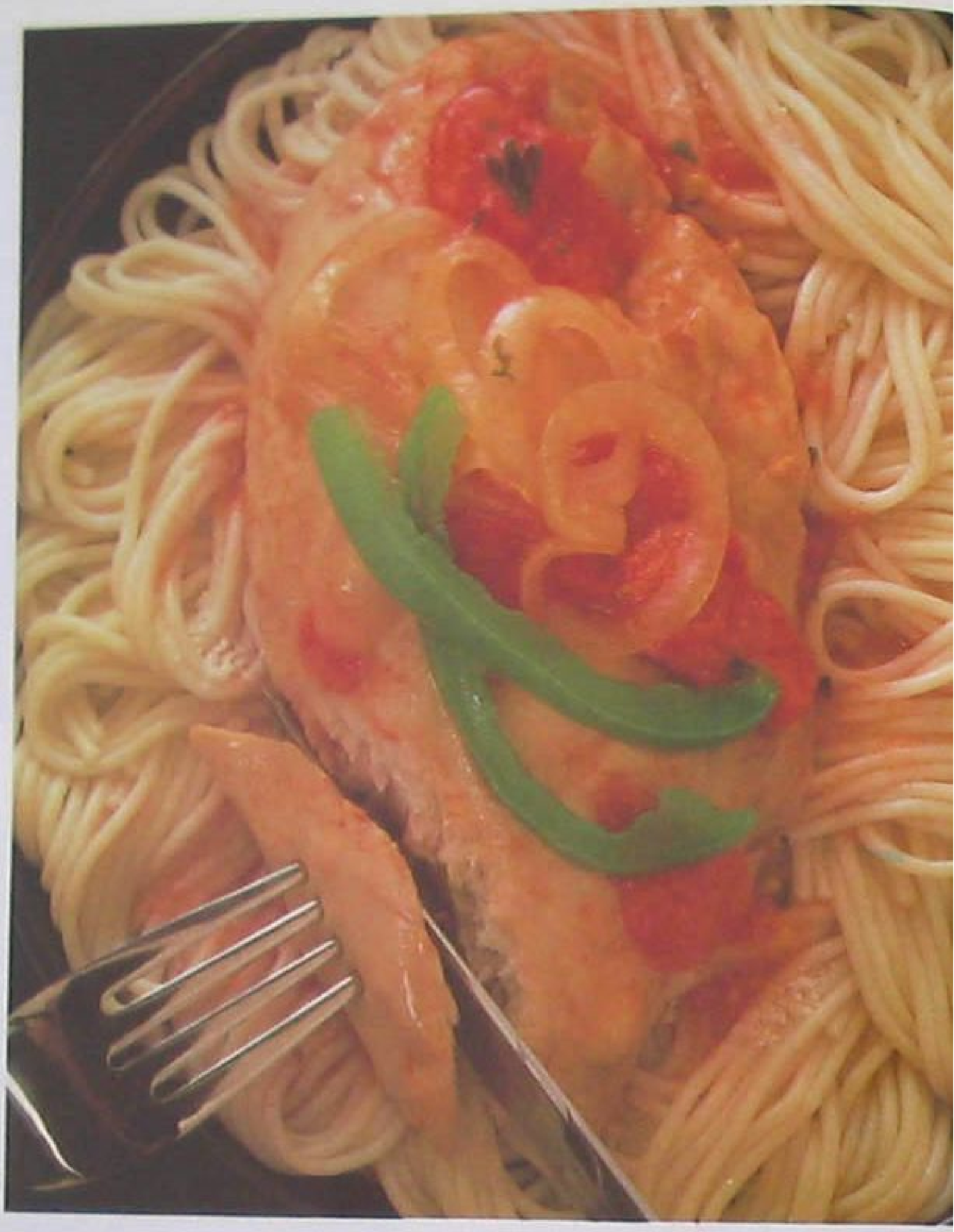
Spoon *the stuffing mixture into the tomatoes, cover the dish with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes or until the tomatoes are tender, rotating the dish a half turn halfway through cooking.*

Sprinkle *the remaining cheese over the tomatoes, cover and stand for 2-3 minutes or until the cheese melts.*

Spicy creole sausage

14 mins

Standing time: none



225g / 8oz pork sausagemeat
1 celery stalk, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
4 spring onions, chopped
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls bottled tomato sauce
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
good pinch of paprika
cayenne pepper
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 4

1 Crumble the sausagemeat into a casserole. Add the celery, green pepper and spring onions, cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until the sausagemeat is no longer pink and the vegetables are softened. Stir the mixture halfway through microwaving to break up the sausagemeat for even cooking.

2 Drain off fat from dish, then stir in the remaining ingredients and cover loosely. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 9-12 minutes or until the mixture is slightly thickened, stirring twice during cooking. Serve with boiled rice and a crisp side salad.

Spicy Creole Sausage

Chicken breasts cacciatore

21 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This 'hunter's-style' chicken makes a hearty main course with a green vegetable or salad.

397g / 14oz can tomatoes, chopped
½ green pepper, in thin strips
1 onion, sliced in rings
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine
good pinch of dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
salt and pepper to taste
4 boneless chicken breasts, skinned
225g / 8oz spaghetti, cooked conventionally (or in the microwave, see Microtips, Part 28, page 750)
25g / 1oz Mozzarella, grated

SERVES 4

1 In a casserole, combine the tomatoes, green pepper, onion, wine, herbs and seasoning to taste. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes or until vegetables are tender, stirring once halfway through cooking.

2 Arrange the chicken breasts in a shallow casserole with the meatiest portions to the outside of the dish. Spoon the vegetable mixture over the chicken. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-18 minutes or until chicken is tender and no longer pink. Rearrange the chicken and baste with the vegetable mixture twice during cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

3 Meanwhile, sprinkle the drained, hot spaghetti with the cheese and toss together lightly. Arrange chicken breasts over spaghetti, spoon over vegetables.

Above: *Chicken Breasts Cacciatore*

Microtips

Cooked spaghetti may be reheated in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until heated through; stir twice during reheating.

Veal country-style

13 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

4 thin veal escalopes
1 onion, thinly sliced in rings
150g / 5oz tomato paste
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
good pinch of garlic powder
salt and pepper to taste
3 tomatoes, skinned (see Microtips, page 1048)
2 courgettes, sliced
1 yellow or red pepper, seeded and chopped

SERVES 4

1 Place veal in a large dish and top with onion rings. Combine the tomato paste, herbs, garlic, salt and pepper. Stir in all remaining ingredients and spread over veal.

2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 13-18 minutes, or until veal is no longer pink and vegetables are tender. Rearrange veal after 8 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes. Serve with baked potatoes and a crisp green salad.

Veal country-style for two: halve all the ingredients. Prepare as above, then microwave at 100% (High) for 9-15 minutes, rearranging after 5 minutes, until just cooked.

Veal Country-Style

Refrigerator cookies

When you or the children need a 'light bite', try the all-American standby — cookies. Cookie dough keeps well in the refrigerator, ready to be shaped 'n' baked microwave-style as needed.

Refrigerator cookies are an ideal anytime filler: not quite a cake, yet more satisfying than a biscuit. The dough is kept in the refrigerator and the cookies are baked so quickly in the microwave that you can literally make batches to order.

Mixing is important for microwave cookies — the dough needs to be stiffer than for conventional oven-baked ones to stop them spreading during cooking. Measure the ingredients carefully to ensure the right consistency and if the mixture becomes too stiff to mix by electric mixer, use a wooden spoon to work in the rest of the flour.

Shaped cookie dough is ideal for storing in the refrigerator. Slices can easily be cut from a chilled roll and hold their shape during microwave cooking much better than if starting at room temperature. Covered tightly, cookie dough will keep for up to two weeks in the refrigerator. Since it is sensible to slice or shape and bake the dough as necessary, the recipe time boxes refer to the time for microwaving one batch of cookies only.

From left to right: *Butter Cookies, Wholewheat Oat Cookies and Choc Drop Cookies*

Microtips

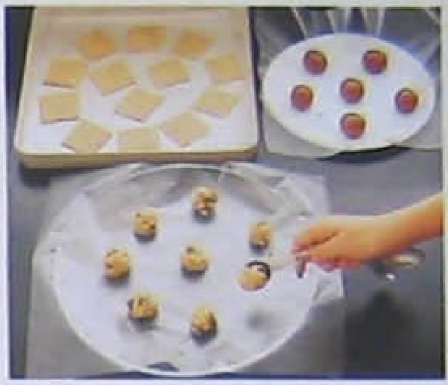
Microwaved cookies are thicker and less crisp than biscuits and have a more flaky texture. If you are going to frost the tops, decorate only as many as you are likely to eat in one sitting as any left over will become soggy.

Cook's notes

When cutting slices of dough from the refrigerated roll, use a very sharp knife and cut with a sawing motion to make even-shaped cookies of a uniform thickness.

How to microwave cookies

Arrange *the cookies on a piece of greaseproof paper so that they are easy to turn. Place on a large plate, microwave baking sheet or shallow pie dish so they are slightly raised, to ensure even cooking.*



Space *the cookies evenly in a ring round the edge of the dish, placing one or more in the middle. Cook six to ten cookies at a time and give the paper a quarter turn halfway through the cooking time.*

Microwave *the cookies at 50% (Medium). For 500 watt machines without variable power, check the individual recipe times. (This time is often less than for medium power on a higher wattage machine.)*

Increase *the power to 70% (Medium-High) if the cookies are still moist and doughy after about 2 or 3 minutes and microwave for a further 30-60 seconds, or until the cookies appear just dry on the tops.*

Do not microwave *the cookies beyond the stage where they are dry on top, as they will burn in the middle. Remove cookies that are ready and continue microwaving until all are just dry, but not crisp.*

Slide *greaseproof paper with cookies on it off plate. Let cookies stand, then transfer with a palette knife to a wire rack to cool completely. Serve at once or store in an airtight container for 3-4 days.*

Butter cookies

3
mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz butter, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
225g / 8oz plain flour

MAKES ABOUT 35

VARIATIONS

Choc drop cookies: add 50g / 2oz of chocolate drops and 50g / 2oz chopped nuts to the dough.

Coconut drops: Stir 75g / 3oz plain or toasted flaked coconut and 2.5ml / ½tsp almond flavouring in to the dough. Mix in thoroughly until evenly distributed.

Orange and raisin cookies: add 75g / 3oz raisins and the finely grated zest of an orange.

Nut drops: Make the dough as before, stirring in 75g / 3oz chopped mixed nuts.

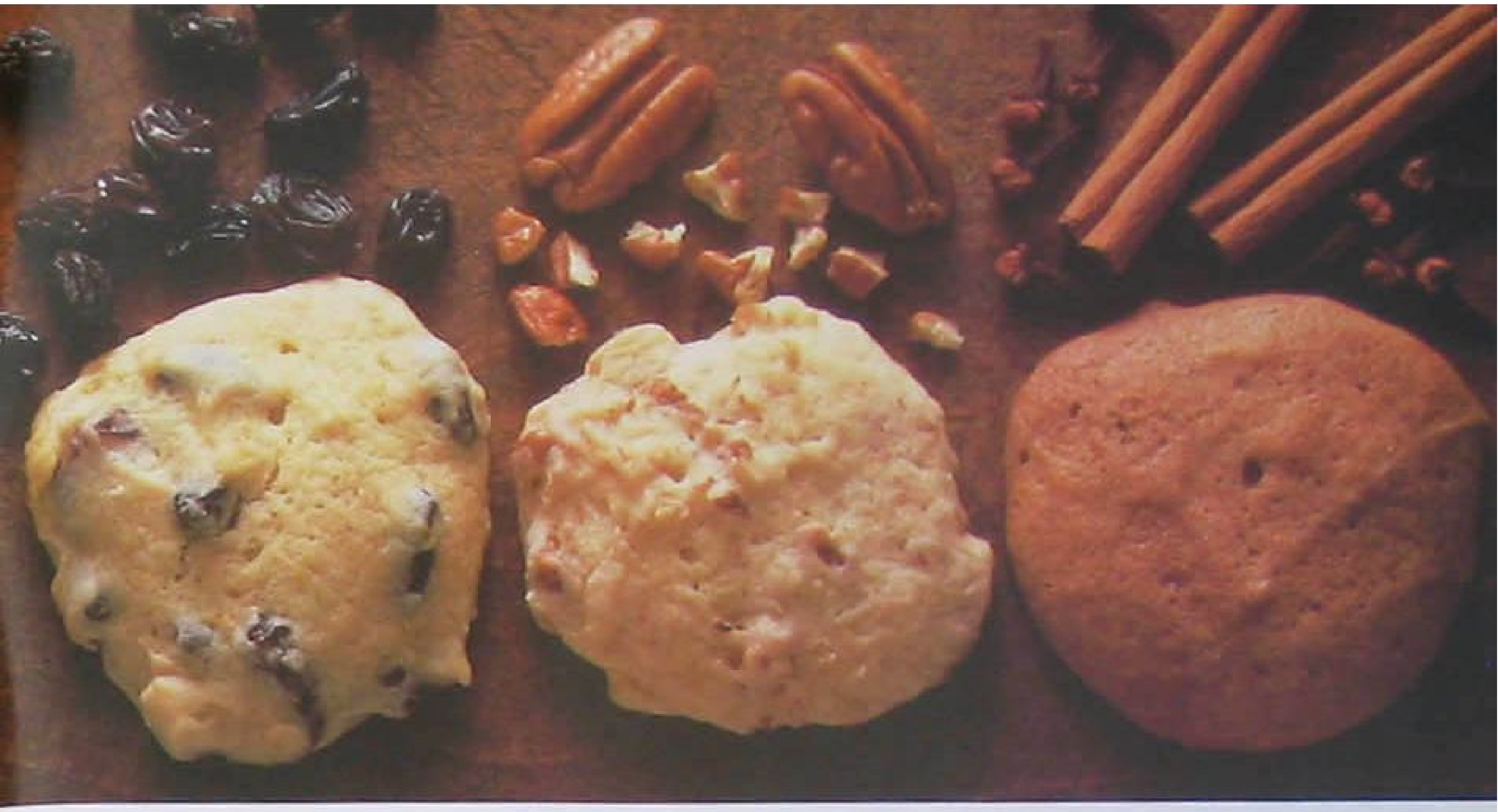
Spice drops: Add 30ml / 2tbls black treacle, 5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon and 1.5ml / ¼tsp each of grated nutmeg, ground ginger and ground cloves (or just one or two of these) to the dough.

How to microwave Butter cookies

Place *all the ingredients except the flour in a large bowl and beat well until fluffy. Stir in the flour and mix to a stiff dough. Chill for 8 hours. Measure seven 5ml / 1tsp portions of mixture on to greaseproof paper: make a ring of six with one in the centre. Store remaining dough in the refrigerator.*

Make *the cookies thinner, if liked, by flattening them to about 6mm / ¼in using the base of a glass. Dip this in caster sugar or a mixture of cinnamon and sugar first to colour the cookies as they do not brown in the microwave. If liked, mark the tops with the prongs of a fork to make a decorative criss-cross pattern when cooked.*

Microwave *the cookies at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes (500 watt, 2½-3½ minutes), or until just dry in the centre, giving the plate a quarter turn every 45 seconds. Remove the cookies as they are cooked and transfer to a wire rack to cool. If liked, top with a frosting (see Part 35, page 964) just before serving.*



From left to right: *Butter Cookie, Choc Drop Cookie, Coconut Drop, Orange and Raisin Cookie, Nut Drop and Spice Drop*

Sliced Peanut Butter Cookies

Sliced peanut butter cookies

2½ mins

Standing time: 1 min

50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz crunchy peanut butter
25g / 1oz butter or margarine, softened
1 egg, beaten
1.5ml / ¼tsp bicarbonate of soda
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
25g / 1oz salted peanuts, chopped

MAKES ABOUT 36

1 Mix all the ingredients except the flour and chopped peanuts in a large bowl and beat well until evenly blended and fluffy in texture.

2 Stir in the flour and peanuts, working well to form a soft dough. Form the dough into a 23cm / 9in-long roll using a piece of greaseproof paper. Wrap the dough in the paper then place in a polythene bag and refrigerate for 8 hours before using.

3 Cut nine 6mm / ¼in slices from the chilled dough and arrange in a ring on a piece of greaseproof paper on the base of a large upturned plate. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½ minutes (500 watt, 2 minutes), giving the paper a quarter turn after 1 minute.

4 Remove from the cooker on the paper and leave to stand for 1 minute. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Return the remaining dough to the refrigerator and store for up to 2 weeks, using and baking in batches as required.

Microtips

To add colour to a batch of microwaved cookies, dust the tops lightly with a little soft brown sugar mixed with cinnamon, or some fine, crisp brown breadcrumbs before cooking.

Cook's notes

Stop microwaving before the cookies start to brown and while they are still just soft to the touch. Allow to stand before cooling on a wire rack — this prevents the bases becoming soggy when cold.

Left: *Wholewheat Oat Cookies*
Right: *Spiced Cookies*

Wholewheat oat cookies

2¼ mins

Standing time: 1 min

50g / 2oz butter or margarine, softened
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
1 egg
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
100g / 4oz plain wholewheat flour
100g / 4oz rolled oats

MAKES ABOUT 36

1 Place all the ingredients except the flour and oats in a large mixing bowl and mix well. Gradually work in the flour and oats to make a soft dough.

2 Form the dough into a 25cm / 10in-long roll. Wrap in greaseproof paper, place in a polythene bag and refrigerate for 8 hours.

3 To make the cookies, cut nine 6mm / ¼in slices from the chilled dough and arrange in a ring on a piece of greaseproof paper on the base of a large upturned plate. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2¼-2¾ minutes (500 watt, 1½ minutes) giving the plate a quarter turn after 1 minute. Leave to stand on the paper for 1 minute.

4 Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Return unused dough to the refrigerator and store for up to two weeks.

Spiced cookies

2 mins

Standing time: 1 min

50g / 2oz butter or margarine, softened
20ml / 4tsp sugar
15ml / 1tbls beaten egg
7.5ml / 1½tsp black treacle
1.5ml / ¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
large pinch of ground cloves
grated zest of ½ small orange
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
15g / ½oz slivered almonds

MAKES ABOUT 25

1 Place all the ingredients except the flour and almonds in a large bowl and beat well to mix.

2 Gradually add the flour and almonds, working them in to make a soft dough.

3 Form the dough into a 15cm / 6in-long roll. Wrap in greaseproof paper, place in a polythene bag and refrigerate for 8 hours.

4 Cut ten 3mm / ⅛in slices from the chilled dough and arrange in a ring on a piece of greaseproof paper on the base of a large upturned plate to raise them from the cooker floor.

5 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2 minutes (500 watt, 1½ minutes), giving the paper a quarter turn after 1 minute.

6 Remove from the cooker on the paper and stand for 1 minute. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Return the remaining dough to the refrigerator and store for up to two weeks.

Cook's notes

Even though the cookie dough gets easier to handle when chilled, it still needs to be stiff when just mixed. If it seems too soft, add a little more flour to the dough and work in thoroughly until the right consistency is reached for successful results.

Sweet and savoury crêpes

Home-made crêpes, whether sweet or savoury, are everybody's favourite. Keep a batch of them, and their fillings, ready in your freezer. With your microwave's help they can be thawed and assembled in minutes.

Crêpes are as delicious as they are versatile — an excellent standby for a snack for lunch or supper, a dinner party starter or a tempting dessert. Make up batches of crêpes conventionally, then microwave a speedy sauce or two and freeze until required. Label the fillings, with a set of instructions for thawing and reheating so any member of the family can thaw and assemble them as required.

Make sure that conventionally cooked crêpes are a deep golden colour on both sides to ensure they stay firm on thawing in the microwave. Make up the fillings and pack in freezer bags as directed in the steps — this way you can cook and thaw in the same dish, without using one for freezing.

Freezing

Wrap the crêpes in batches of eight with freezer tissue between each. If only four servings are required after freezing, freeze the crêpes in batches of four. Store in sealed freezer bags. Freeze the fillings in separate freezer bags for no longer than one month.

Spinach Crêpes

CHRIS KNAGGS

Thawing and heating

Crêpes thaw successfully in the microwave on a plate, or in a browning dish if you prefer them crisp. Thaw eight crêpes as directed in the steps; thaw four crêpes as directed, but for 1-1½ minutes. Uncover and thaw the fillings in their container if it is non-metallic. Once assembled, heat the crêpes until just warmed through and not over-heated to ensure they retain their shape and the fillings do not melt.

Cook's notes

The time boxes for each recipe contain the times for preparing the fillings before freezing. Thawing and reheating times include those for both crêpes and fillings; standing time is for after thawing or reheating.

Basic crêpes

150g / 5oz plain flour
pinch of salt
1 large egg
60ml / 4tbls water
275ml / ½pt milk
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
a little oil for frying

MAKES 16

1 Put the flour and salt into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the egg, water and a little of the milk. Beat the egg mixture with a hand whisk, gradually incorporating flour until completely smooth. Beat in the remaining milk and the oil. Cover and leave in a cool place for 15-30 minutes.

2 Heat a little oil in a small 15cm / 6in frying pan. Drain off the excess oil. Pour a little batter into the pan, tilting pan so batter coats entire base. Cook over a medium heat until the crêpe is set and underside is golden. Turn over and cook the other side until golden brown.

3 Repeat with remaining batter, oiling pan before cooking each crêpe, to make 16 crêpes.

How to freeze and thaw crêpes

To freeze: *stack in batches of eight, interleaving each with squares of freezer paper. Pack into freezer bags. Label and freeze for no longer than one month.*

To thaw: *remove from freezer bag and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2½ minutes; turn once. Stand for 5 minutes. Peel apart.*

How to freeze and thaw fillings

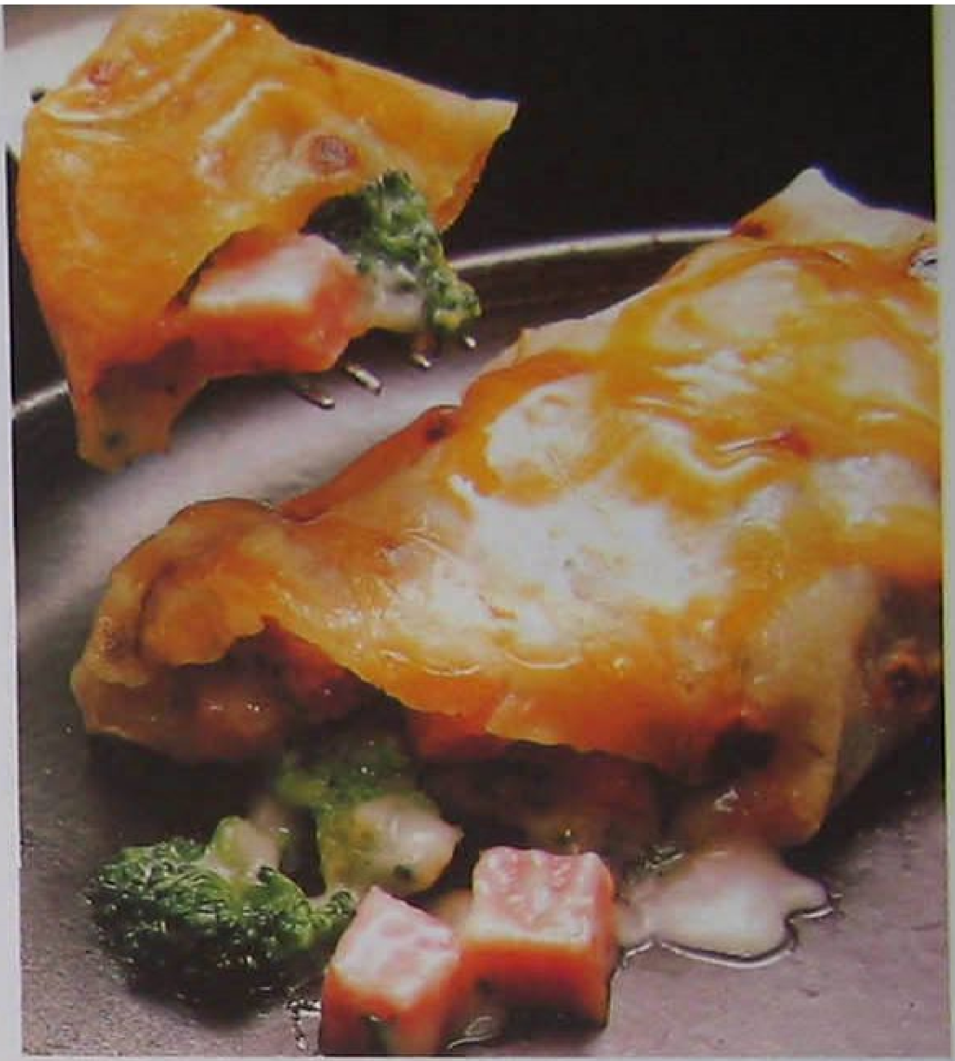
To freeze: *pour the filling into a freezer bag positioned in the container to be used on thawing; cool, then seal. Freeze until solid. Remove from container. Freeze for up to one month.*

To thaw: *open bag and place in container chosen for thawing. Microwave as directed in recipes, until thawed; turn into container when loosened and break up three times.*

How to assemble crêpes with fillings

Divide *the thawed filling among the crêpes, spooning the filling across the centre of each crêpe. Then fold sides of crêpes over the filling.*

Arrange *crêpes side by side in a shallow dish. Top with sauce or cheese, if using. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) until heated through.*



Spinach crêpes

6¼ mins

Thawing and reheating: 16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 basic crêpes (see opposite)

FILLING AND SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp curry powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 leek, finely sliced
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
2 × 225g / 8oz packets frozen spinach, thawed (see Microtips, below) and well drained
2 bacon rashers, cooked and finely chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
60ml / 4tbls single cream

SERVES 4

1 Make and freeze crêpes as directed opposite.
2 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Blend in flour, then milk until smooth; season. Microwave at 100% (High) 2½-3 minutes; stir twice. Spoon two-thirds into separate bowl.
3 Beat the curry powder and mustard into the larger portion of sauce. Pack, label and seal.
4 Place the oil in a bowl with the garlic, leek and mushrooms to make the filling. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in spinach, bacon, nutmeg, cream and remaining sauce; season. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, stirring once; cool.
5 To freeze: pack, label and freeze as directed in steps.

TO SERVE
Thaw crêpes as directed in steps, opposite. Thaw filling as directed in the steps at 100% (High) for 6½-7 minutes. Fill thawed crêpes and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes. Reheat sauce at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes.

Microtips

To thaw 250g / 8.8oz packet frozen broccoli, place in covered bowl. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes, breaking up once.

To thaw two 225g / 8oz packets spinach, microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 12-14 minutes.

Ham roll-ups

5¾ mins

Thawing and reheating: 17½ mins

Standing time: 8 mins

8 basic crêpes (see opposite)

FILLING
250g / 8.8oz packet frozen broccoli, thawed (see Microtips)
15g / ½oz butter
½ small onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
175g / 6oz Red Leicester or Cheddar cheese, grated

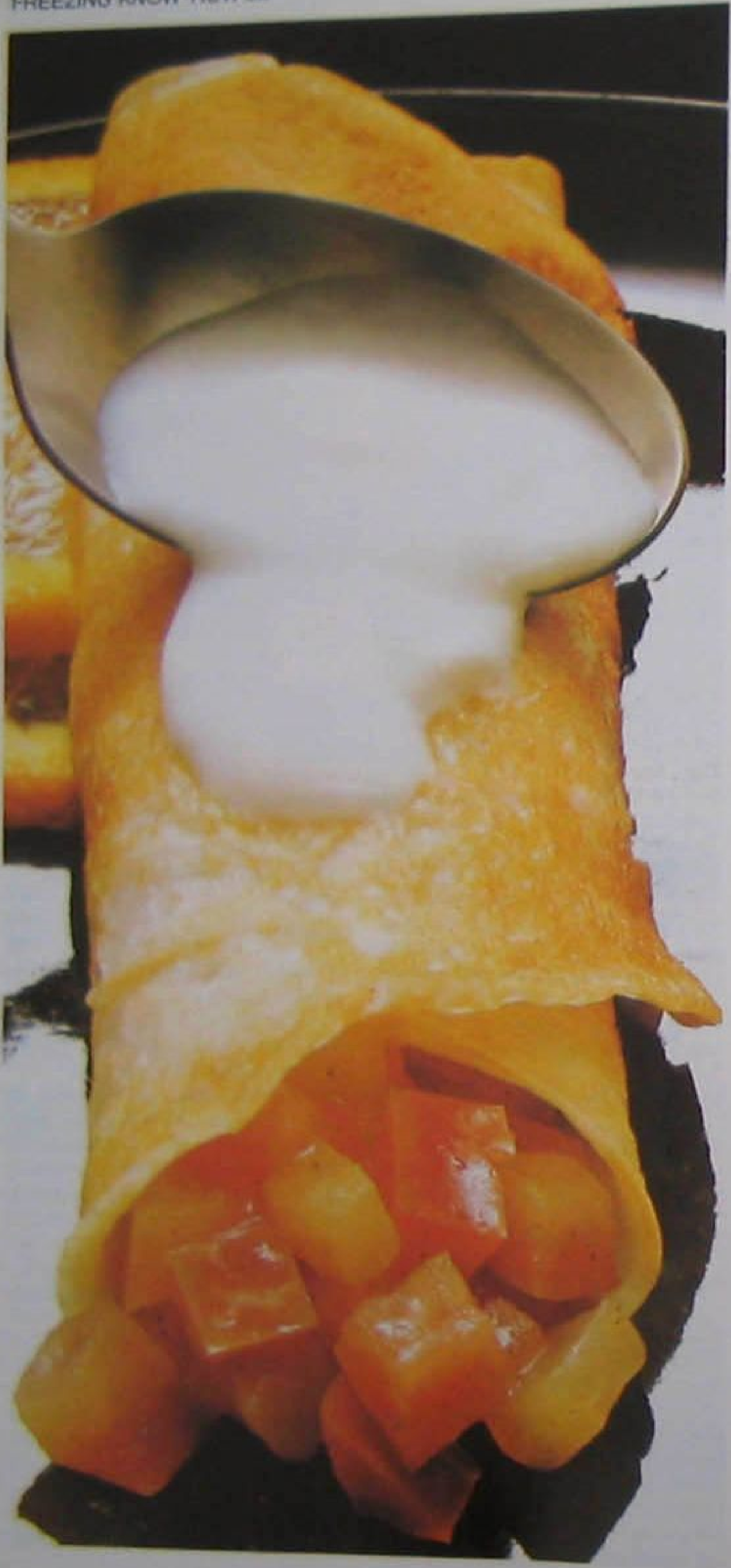
Ham Roll-ups

1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
450g / 1lb cooked ham, diced
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Make and freeze crêpes as directed opposite.
2 Place broccoli in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Drain and chop.
3 Microwave butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Add onion and microwave a further 2 minutes, stirring once.
4 Stir in flour; gradually blend in milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, stirring twice. Stir in half cheese and remaining ingredients. Pack, label and freeze as directed in steps.

TO SERVE
Thaw crêpes as directed, opposite. Thaw filling as directed in steps at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes. Divide between thawed crêpes, roll up and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Stand 3 minutes.



Apple crêpes

2 mins

Thawing and reheating: 15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 basic crêpes (see page 1058)
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
15ml / 1tbls clear honey

FILLING
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
75ml / 3fl oz unsweetened orange juice
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice
60ml / 4tbls clear honey
6 red eating apples (about 700g / 1½lb), cored and diced

SERVES 8

1 Make and freeze crêpes as directed on page 1058.
2 Blend cornflour with a little orange juice in a bowl. Add the remaining juice with zest and juice from whole orange and allspice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stir twice to thicken.
3 Stir in the honey for the filling and apples and allow to cool.
4 To freeze: pack, label and freeze as directed in the steps.

TO SERVE
Thaw crêpes as directed on page 1058. Thaw filling as directed in the steps at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes. Divide between crêpes; roll up. Microwave at 100% (High) 3½-4 minutes to heat. Blend yoghurt with honey and serve.

VARIATION
Apple crêpes for four: freeze in two containers. Thaw one at 100% (High) 5 minutes. Divide between four crêpes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

Microtips

Fillings can be thawed at 100% (High) or 20-30% (Defrost) depending on how delicate they are. Those with fruit or that are liable to melt should be thawed at the lower setting to prevent spoiling, and heated until only just warmed.

Banana crêpes

1½ mins

Thawing and reheating: 9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 basic crêpes (see page 1058)
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
5 firm bananas, cut into 1cm / ½in pieces

FILLING
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt cream soda
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ground cinnamon

SERVES 8

1 Make and freeze crêpes as directed on page 1058.
2 Blend the cornflour with a little of the cream soda. Then stir in the remaining soda with the ginger and cinnamon. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, stirring twice to thicken; cool.
3 To freeze: pack, label and freeze as directed in the steps.

TO SERVE
Thaw crêpes as directed on page 1058. Thaw filling as directed in steps at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes; stir in bananas. Fill thawed crêpes; microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Top with yoghurt.

VARIATION
Banana crêpes for four: Freeze filling in two containers. Thaw one container at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes. Divide between four crêpes and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes to heat.

Raspberry cheese crêpes

30 secs

Thawing and reheating: 17 mins

Standing time: 7 mins

8 basic crêpes (see, page 1058)
60ml / 4tbls seedless raspberry jam

FILLING
2 × 200g / 7oz packet full fat soft cheese
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
60ml / 4tbls seedless raspberry jam
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mixed spice

SERVES 8

1 Make and freeze the crêpes as directed on page 1058.
2 Beat the soft cheese in a bowl until smooth and creamy. Drain off excess liquid from cottage cheese; stir into beaten cheese.
3 Blend the jam for the filling with the vanilla flavouring, lemon juice and spice in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds. Stir into the cheese.
4 To freeze: pack, label and freeze as directed in the steps.

TO SERVE
Thaw crêpes as directed, page 1058. Thaw filling as directed in steps at 20-30% (Defrost) for 13-14 minutes. Stand 2 minutes. Fill the thawed crêpes and heat at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until just warmed. Microwave the jam at 100% (High) for 30-40 seconds to melt. Drizzle over crêpes to serve.

Mocha crêpes

0 mins

Thawing and reheating: 6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 basic crêpes (see 1058)
100g / 4oz ratafia or almond biscuits, broken up
30ml / 2tbls rum or sherry
90ml / 6tbls double cream whipped

FILLING
1 packet chocolate flavour instant dessert mix
milk to mix
30ml / 2tbls coffee flavouring*

SERVES 8

1 Make and freeze crêpes as directed on page 1058.
2 Make up the chocolate dessert mix using 50ml / 2fl oz less milk than stated on packet directions. Stir in coffee flavouring.
3 To freeze: pack, label and freeze as directed in steps.

TO SERVE
Thaw crêpes as directed in steps, page 1058. Thaw filling as directed in steps at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes, or until just soft enough to scoop. Mix the biscuits with the rum or sherry. Combine with the chocolate mix to fill thawed crêpes, reserving a little chocolate mix. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until warm. Serve with reserved chocolate mix and cream.

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*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use coffee essence.

Microwaving broccoli

Crunchy, colourful broccoli will dress up any meal, but don't save it for special occasions, the family will love it too. Serve broccoli as an accompaniment or try a bake with cheese or cauliflower.

The colour and texture of broccoli make it an attractive and appetizing vegetable and microwaving makes the most of both these characteristics. It also ensures that the nutrients in the vegetable are retained as well as the colour.

To make sure that the fragile florets do not overcook before the tougher stalks become tender, place the heads towards the centre of the dish. Choose a fairly shallow dish for microwaving broccoli spears — a round or rectangular dish is best.

Broccoli can be served on its own or in combination with other vegetables as a simple hot or cold accompaniment. Try it with cauliflower as an attractive contrast of colours as well as flavours. This tasty vegetable also combines well with cheese and cheese or cream sauces.

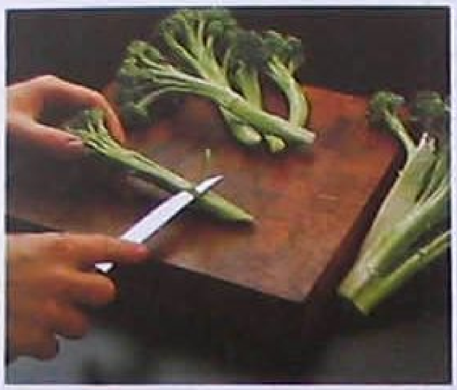
Broccoli with Mayonnaise Dip

How to select and store broccoli

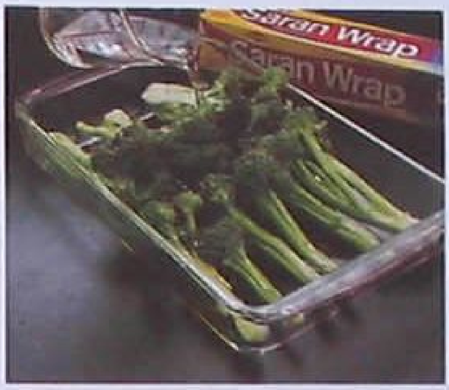
To select *fresh broccoli, look for firm, green stalks with tightly closed, dark green or purple-green heads. The size of the head is no indication of age or quality, but yellowing florets mean the vegetable is past its best. Avoid broccoli with limp stalks as this is likely to be stringy.*

Store *unwashed fresh broccoli in a loosely-tied polythene bag; place the bag in the refrigerator and use within three days.*

How to prepare and microwave broccoli spears



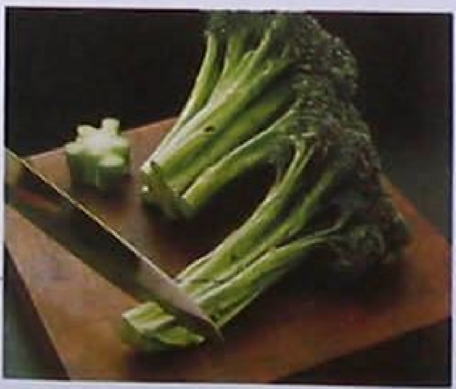
Trim *2.5cm / 1in from the ends of the stalks. Divide into spears and peel the skin from bottom 5cm / 2in of the stalks or to where the broccoli branches into florets, if wished. Rinse in cold water to clean.*



Place *the broccoli spears in a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in baking dish, arranging the tender heads towards the centre of the dish. Pour over 60ml / 4tbls water and cover the dish with a lid or vented cling film.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) until the broccoli stalks are tender (see chart page 1064 for cooking times), rotating the dish a half turn halfway through the cooking time. Stand for the recommended time, then drain.*

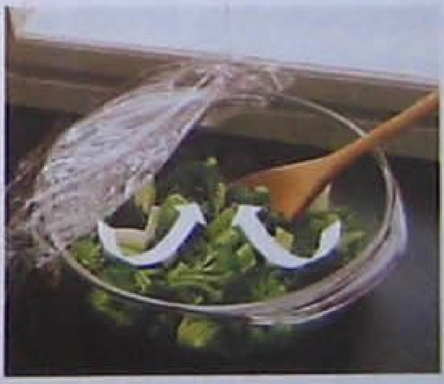
How to prepare and microwave broccoli pieces



Rinse *the broccoli thoroughly. Trim away 2.5cm / 1in from the stalk ends, then divide into spears. Peel the stalks to where the broccoli branches into florets, if wished.*

Saran Wrap
Saran Wrap

Cut *the florets into 2.5cm / 1in lengths. Place in a medium-sized casserole and pour over 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover the dish with cling film rolled back at one edge.*



Microwave *at 100% (High) until the pieces are tender (see chart on page 1064 for cooking times); stir once halfway through. Stand for recommended time, then drain.*

How to microwave frozen broccoli spears

Place *frozen broccoli in a casserole with 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover the casserole with a lid or cling film, rolled back at one edge.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) until broccoli is hot and fork tender, stirring once. See chart below for recommended microwaving times.*

Leave *the broccoli to stand, covered, for 2-3 minutes to equalize heat and complete cooking. Drain the broccoli thoroughly before serving.*

Broccoli with mayonnaise dip

9 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Serve this dip and dunk dish as an elegant appetizer.

450g / 1lb broccoli spears
chopped parsley and lemon slices to garnish

MAYONNAISE
3 egg yolks
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
275ml / ½pt sunflower oil
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Make the mayonnaise: place the egg yolks in a small bowl and beat them up with a fork. Add 5ml / 1tsp lemon juice. Put oil in a small measuring jug. Microwave both at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1 minute, stirring gently after half the cooking time.

2 Place the egg yolks, mustard, salt and pepper in a blender goblet. With the motor running, gradually add a little of the oil, through the hole in the lid, in a very thin trickle. The sound of the blender will change as the oil is incorporated and the mayonnaise thickens — you can then add more oil.

3 When half the oil has been added, add the remainder more quickly. When all the oil has been incorporated, add the remaining lemon juice, adjust seasoning and blend again.

4 Meanwhile, microwave the broccoli spears following the step-by-step instructions on page 1063. Drain and cover with cling film until ready to serve.

5 Transfer the mayonnaise to a serving bowl and garnish with a twist of lemon rind. Place the bowl in the centre of a large plate and arrange the broccoli spears, cartwheel-style, around the dish.

VARIATION
Thin the mayonnaise with more lemon juice and pour over the hot broccoli. Serve as an accompaniment for cold meats or cheese dishes.

Microwaving times for broccoli

TYPE	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	PROCEDURE
Fresh spears	225g / 8oz 450g / 1lb	4-5 minutes 8-9 minutes	Place florets to centre of dish, add 60ml / 4tbls water, cover. Stand for 2-3 or 3-4 minutes.
2.5cm / 1in pieces	225g / 8oz 450g / 1lb	4½-5 minutes 8½-9½ minutes	Add 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover and microwave. Stir once during cooking. Stand for 2½-3½ or 3-5 minutes.
Frozen spears	225g / 9oz pkt 2 × 225g / 9oz pkt	8½-9½ minutes 14-15 minutes	Add 60ml / 4tbls water. Stand 2-3 minutes.

Broccoli chicken rolls

13 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

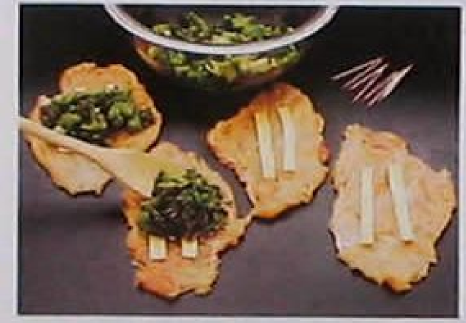
This is an elegant dinner party dish: delicious with gratin potatoes. To beat out the chicken breasts, place between two sheets of dampened cling film.

450g / 1lb broccoli, cut into small florets
2 slices processed cheese
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, about 175g / 6oz each, beaten out to 6mm / ¼in thick

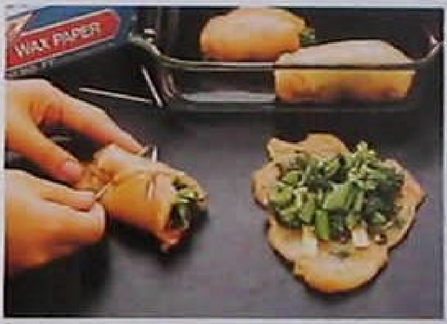
SAUCE
150ml / ¼pt milk
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
15ml / 1tbls white wine
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp white pepper

SERVES 4

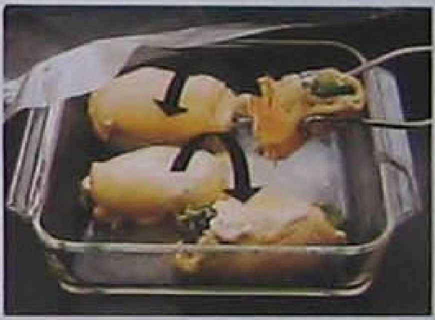
How to microwave Broccoli chicken rolls



Microwave *broccoli at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, see page 1064. Cut one cheese slice into eight strips and divide between the chicken breasts. Place a quarter of the broccoli on top of each.*



Fold *the ends of the chicken over the broccoli and secure with small cocktail sticks. Place the rolls, seam side down in a baking dish. Cover with greaseproof paper.*



Microwave *the rolls at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the chicken is no longer pink, rearranging and turning the rolls over twice. Allow to stand, while making the sauce.*

Blend *the milk, flour, wine, parsley and pepper in a measuring jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until thickened, whisking once or twice. Cut up the remaining cheese slice, add to sauce and stir until melted and smooth. Check the seasoning and adjust to taste.*

Pour *the sauce over the chicken and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until the sauce and rolls are well heated through.*

Crusty broccoli bake

27½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 9oz packet frozen broccoli spears
4 eggs, lightly beaten
275ml / ½pt milk
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
6 small slices wholewheat bread, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes

SERVES 4-6

1 Microwave the broccoli following the step-by-step instructions on page 1064. Drain thoroughly and chop into 2.5cm / 1in pieces.
2 Beat together the eggs, milk, seasoning and parsley. Stir in the cheese, broccoli spears and bread cubes. Pour into a 20cm / 8in square or 20 × 15cm / 8 × 6in baking dish. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight to soak up the liquid.
3 Cover with greaseproof paper and place the dish on an inverted plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Rotate the dish a quarter turn and reduce the power to 50% (Medium). Microwave for 16-18 minutes, or until lightly set in the centre. Rotate the dish a quarter turn three or four times and remove the greaseproof paper halfway through cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes then serve with a salad for a light lunch or supper dish.

Slimmer's notes

Use skimmed milk and low calorie Cheddar cheese to make this bake and it will have 235Cal / 985kJ per portion for four people.

Crusty Broccoli Bake

Broccoli and cauliflower pie

7¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The briefly microwaved vegetables retain a crisp texture which complements the rich sauce.

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING
225g / 8oz fresh or frozen broccoli spears
100g / 4oz frozen cauliflower florets
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and cayenne pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
275ml / ½pt milk
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese, grated
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls chopped walnuts

SERVES 4

1 Place the broccoli and cauliflower florets in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once. Drain and cut into small pieces.
2 Microwave the butter in a measuring jug at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the flour and season to taste with salt and cayenne pepper. Gradually blend in the milk.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for

1½ minutes, or until thickened, stirring every 30 seconds. Reserve 15ml / 1tbls of each cheese, then stir the rest into the sauce along with the vegetables.

4 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared pastry case and sprinkle the reserved cheese and the walnuts on top. Microwave the pie at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes or until hot, rotating a half turn, once. Stand for 5 minutes.

VARIATION

Sprinkle the top of the pie with the cheese and 15ml / 1tbls breadcrumbs instead of the walnuts.

Microtips

To reheat one serving of pie, place the slice on a piece of absorbent paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½ minutes, rotating a half turn once.

Italian broccoli and tomatoes

8 mins

Standing time: none

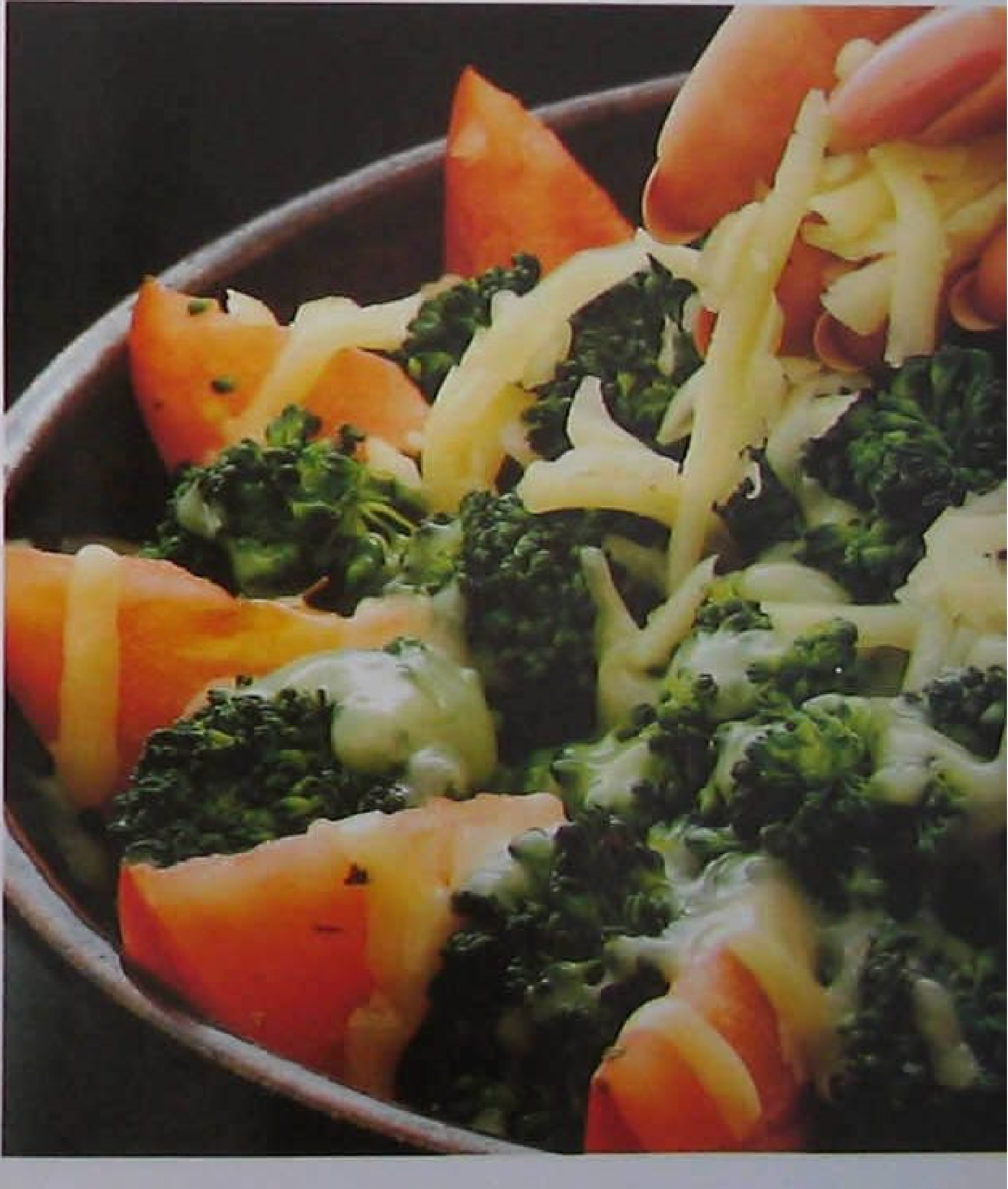
450-550g / 1-1¼lb broccoli spears
125ml / ¼pt water
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano or 5ml / 1tsp chopped fresh
2 tomatoes, cut in wedges
75g / 3oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Place the broccoli in a casserole with the heads to the centre. Add the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until tender-crisp. Drain, then sprinkle with the oregano.

2 Arrange the tomato wedges around the outside of a large dish and place the broccoli in the centre. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the tomatoes are hot.

3 Sprinkle with cheese and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until the cheese melts.



Above: *Broccoli and Cauliflower Pie*
Below: *Italian Broccoli and Tomatoes*

Fruit crumbles

Crisp, golden fruit crumbles have always been a traditional favourite — as tasty as a pie, but so much simpler. Microwaving makes them even quicker and easier — a really special pudding in no time.

While pastry-topped pies do not number among the microwave's success stories, crumble toppings cook particularly well. Use them to make a 'pastry' base and a crumble-style pie crust and turn simple stewed fruit into something special.

A basic crumble can be flavoured with mixed spice, cinnamon or nutmeg, or be given added texture with chopped nuts, rolled oats or shredded coconut. Crumble the mixture lightly for a smooth, fine covering, or add water to the crumbled ingredients to produce a coarser texture.

Deep Dish Crumble made with rhubarb and raspberries

CHRIS KNAGGS

Where the raw fruit is quite fibrous (rhubarb, for example), it may need preliminary cooking before adding the crumble. Do not add too much liquid to the fruit, or the crumble will sink into it.

The crumble pastry mixture (see Quick Cherry Crumble Pie, page 1071) fulfils a dual purpose. Crumble one half with water to make a rich topping, and knead the other to a smooth dough to make a pastry case.

Choose a deep dish for crumbles, and do not fill it right to the top. This ensures that the juice from the cooking fruit does not bubble over the top of the dish.

As with most microwave bakes, overcooking will make the centre of the crumble dry and hard.

Crispy apple pudding

14¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

900g / 2lb cooking apples, peeled and sliced
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar

TOPPING
75g / 3oz butter, diced
60ml / 4tbls demerara sugar
75g / 3oz quick-cooking rolled oats
75g / 3oz plain flour
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 6

Freezer notes

Fruit crumbles freeze so well, so it is worth making double amounts while you're cooking.

Freeze assembled crumbles, either cooked or uncooked, for up to three months. To cook crumbles from frozen: microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15 minutes, to thaw completely, then at 100% (High) for 5 minutes to heat a ready-cooked one, or for 10-14 minutes to cook a raw one, turning several times.

Microtips

Crumble toppings do colour a little during microwaving. If you want to give a more appetizing, golden appearance to the finished pudding, flash the topping under a hot grill after microwaving, turning dish frequently, until evenly browned. Alternatively, use wholewheat flour in place of white in the basic mixture, or substitute dark soft brown sugar for light. (Cooking times remain the same.)

How to microwave Crispy apple pudding

Mix *the apples, lemon juice and sugar and spread in a deep 20cm / 8in dish. Place the butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until melted.*

Stir *the topping ingredients into the butter, mixing until an even, crumbly texture is reached. Sprinkle evenly over the apples and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes until tender.*

Give *the dish a quarter turn after 7 minutes, then stop microwaving when the apples are just tender. Remove from the cooker and stand for 5 minutes. Serve hot with cream.*

Deep dish apple crumble

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

900g / 2lb cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced
50g / 2oz sultanas
75-100g / 3-4oz light soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg

TOPPING
225g / 8oz plain flour
pinch of salt
175g / 6oz butter, diced
60ml / 4tbls demerara sugar

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine the apples, sultanas, sugar, flour and spices in a large bowl. Mix well and turn into a deep buttered 25cm / 10in pie dish.

2 To make the topping, sift the flour and salt into a bowl and rub in the butter, using the fingertips, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and mix until evenly blended.

3 Spread the topping evenly over the apple mixture. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 10-14 minutes, or until the apples are tender, giving the dish a quarter turn every 4 minutes. Remove from the cooker and leave to stand for 10 minutes to complete cooking. Serve warm with cream or custard.

VARIATION

Rhubarb and raspberry crumble: use two 450g / 1lb cans rhubarb, drained. Mix with 275g / 10oz defrosted frozen raspberries, 60ml / 4tbls sugar and 30ml / 2tbls flour. Omit the nutmeg.

Microwave the filling on its own, covered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, stirring after 3 minutes. Uncover, stir again, then sprinkle the topping over it. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-14 minutes, as for the apple crumble. Leave to stand for 10 minutes to finish cooking.

Deep Dish Apple Crumble

Quick cherry crumble pie

11
mins

Standing time: 3 mins

400g / 14oz cherry pie filling*

CRUMBLE PASTRY
225g / 8oz plain flour
100g / 4oz butter, diced
50g / 2oz lard or cooking margarine, diced
60-75ml / 4-5tbls cold water

SERVES 6

VARIATION

Use 425g / 15oz can apple pie filling in place of the cherry.

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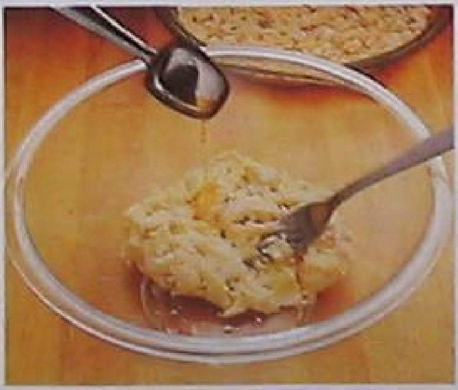
*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use apple or apple and loganberry filling in the above recipe.

How to microwave Quick crumble pie

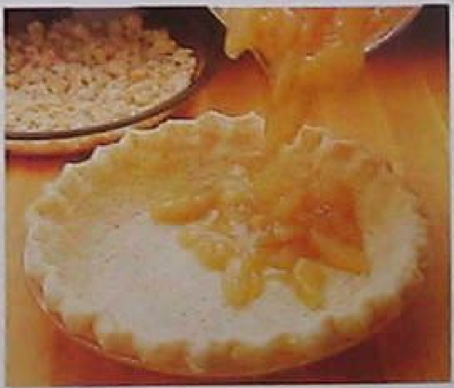
Make *the crumble topping: sift the flour into a bowl. Rub or cut in the butter and lard until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs.*

Transfer *half of the crumble mixture to a lightly-greased shallow dish and sprinkle over 30ml / 2tbls of water, tossing with a fork to mix.*

Spread *the crumble mixture evenly in the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until crisp and crumbly. Set aside.*

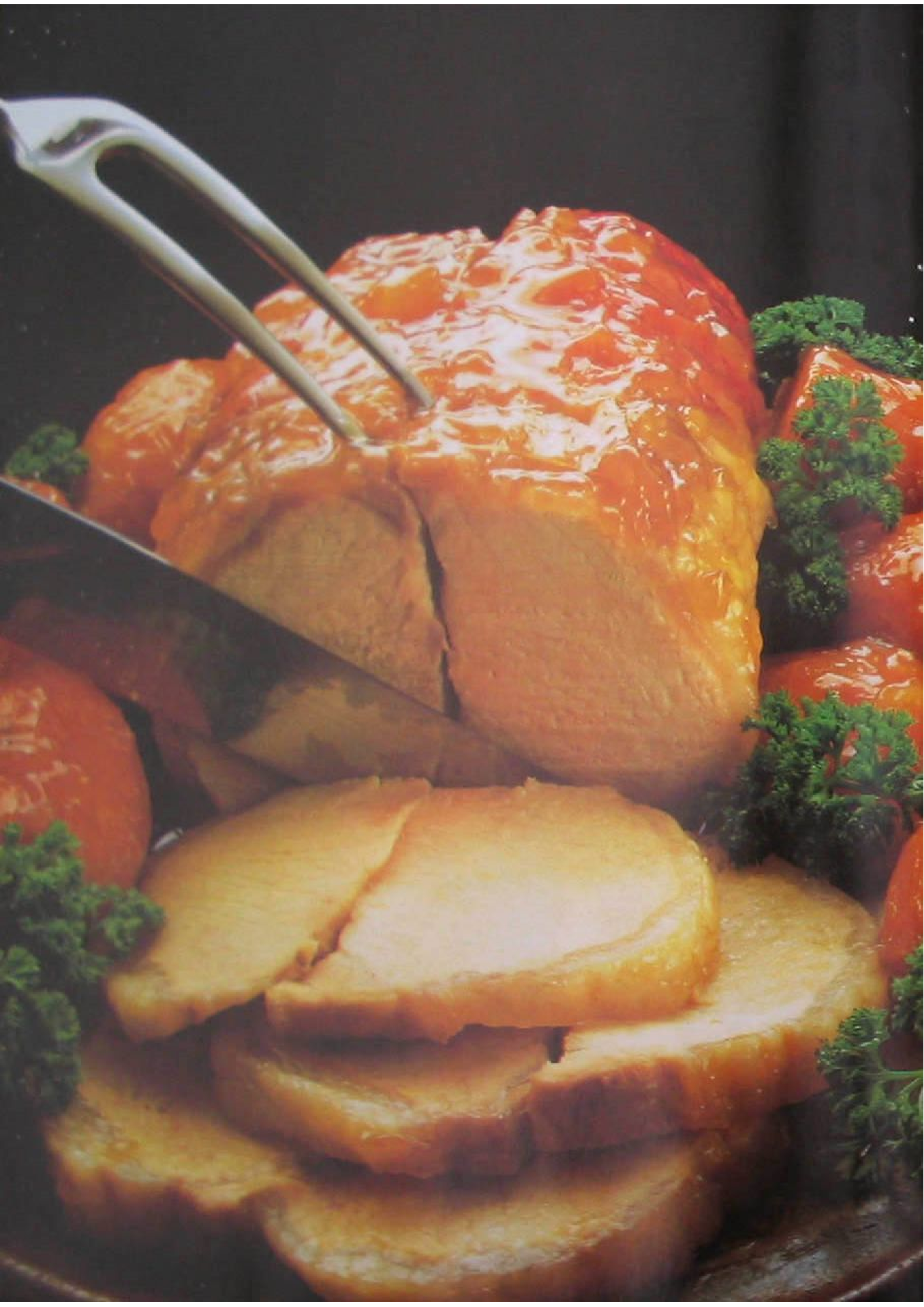


Make *the crumble pastry: sprinkle the remaining water over the raw crumble and cut it in with a knife. Form into a dough and roll out to line a 23cm / 9in pie dish. Prick the base all over with a fork.*



Line *with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, giving a quarter turn every minute. Remove paper and microwave for 2-3 minutes. Cool and fill with the chosen fruit filling.*

Sprinkle *the cooled crumble evenly over the fruit. Place the dish on an upturned plate, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the filling is warm. Leave to stand for 3 minutes.*



Easy weekend lunch

If you dream of having a lie-in on Sunday morning, but still want a traditional, substantial lunch, your microwave can make it come true — and the Countdown makes it even easier.

With a little careful pre-planning, using the Countdown and some help from the microwave, even a late riser can conjure up an impressive Sunday lunch.

The courses balance well — the light soup is followed by rich glazed pork and parsnips, with fresh-tasting tomatoes and creamy mashed potato. Round the meal off with a creamy raspberry fool.

Prepare the vegetables for the soup in advance, but do not shred the lettuce, as it will become limp overnight. Trim the pork, but leave a thin layer of fat around the roll to moisten and flavour the meat. (not too much, as this attracts microwaves from the meat).

As there is a double quantity of biscuits, store leftovers in an airtight tin for 2-3 days.

Glazed Pork with Parsnips

Lettuce soup

7 mins

Standing time: none

2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
2 spring onions, chopped
25g / 1oz butter, cut in small pieces
1.1L / 2pt hot vegetable or chicken stock
¼ crisp lettuce, shredded
100g / 4oz cooked long-grain rice
2 carrots, thinly sliced
salt and pepper
4 thin lemon slices

SERVES 6

1 Place the celery, green pepper, onion and butter in a large casserole dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender, stirring after 2 minutes to ensure even cooking.

2 Add all the remaining ingredients except the lemon slices, stirring thoroughly.

3 Cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thoroughly heated. Stir well, then ladle straight into heated serving bowls and serve each one with a slice of lemon floated on top.

Cook's notes

To make thin slices of carrot, use a vegetable peeler to pare thin curls down the length of the carrots. These curls also make a pretty decoration for cold dishes and cocktail savouries.

Countdown

The previous day
Microwave the biscuits, cool on a wire rack, then store in an airtight container. Prepare the vegetables for the soup, but do not shred the lettuce. Store in individual polythene bags in the refrigerator. Peel the potatoes and parsnips, cover with cold water and refrigerate.

Microwave the raspberries until just soft and make the fool. Cover the surface with cling film and refrigerate.

During the morning
Remove all the vegetables from the refrigerator. Shred the lettuce and microwave the soup. Cover and set aside. Prepare the tomatoes and arrange in a dish. Divide the fool between six dessert glasses, decorate and return to the refrigerator. Microwave the potatoes, mash thoroughly, then place in a serving dish. Cover and set aside. Microwave the glaze for the meat and parsnips.

An hour and a half before
Baste the meat and microwave for the calculated time. Cover with foil and leave to stand while you microwave the parsnips. Reheat the soup at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes. Serve immediately.

Between courses
Reheat the potato by microwaving at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Microwave the tomatoes, then serve the main course.

MENU

Lettuce Soup
A fresh-tasting, light vegetable mixture

Glazed Pork with Parsnips
Easy-to-carve joint with a fruity glaze

Creamy Mashed Potato
A hot family favourite

Hot Herb Tomatoes
Seasoned and heated but not cooked

Raspberry Yoghurt Fool
Lightly crushed fruit in creamy thick yoghurt

Hazelnut Biscuits
A perfect sweet complement to fruit fool

SERVES 6

Glazed pork with parsnips

51 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

1.4kg / 3lb boned and rolled loin of pork
700g / 1½lb parsnips, cut in 5cm / 2in wedges
parsley sprigs to garnish

GLAZE
100g / 4oz demerara sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
150ml / ¼pt orange juice
100g / 4oz pineapple or apricot jam

SERVES 6

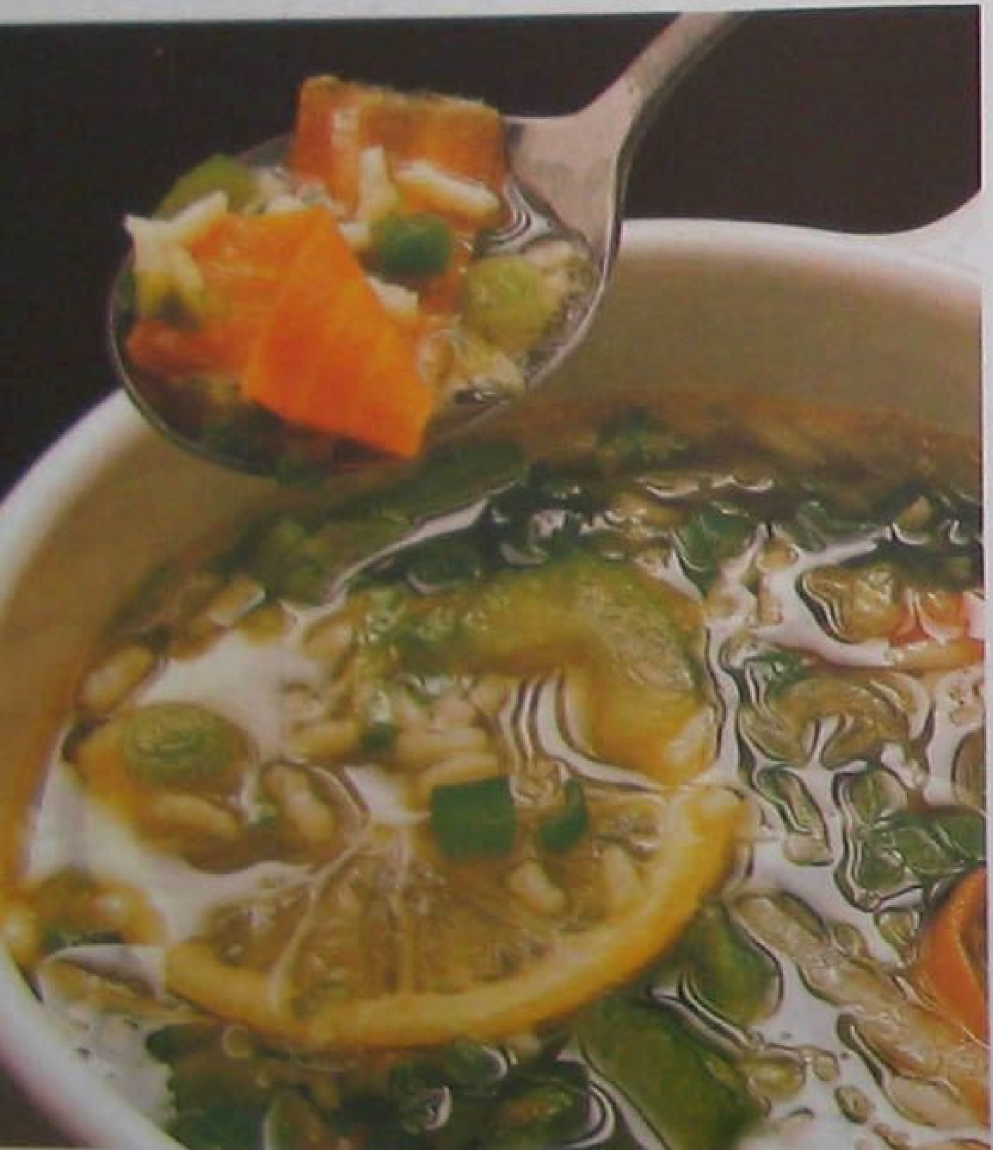
1 First make the glaze. Combine all the ingredients in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every minute. Set aside, covered.
2 Trim any excess fat from the pork loin and weigh it. Calculate the cooking time allowing 11 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Brush the pork all over with the glaze and place it on a roasting rack, set in a shallow dish, seam side up. Insert a microwave thermometer. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 33 minutes (or the calculated cooking time), or until the internal temperature of the meat reaches 82°C / 180°F. After 20 minutes cooking time, turn the meat over; baste with more glaze.
3 Remove from the cooker and leave to stand, covered in foil, for 15 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, cook the parsnips. Mix the parsnips with the remaining glaze in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Toss well to coat, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, or until the parsnips are tender, turning them over after half the cooking time. Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Arrange on a heated carving dish with the parsnips. Garnish.

Microtips

Drain away any excess juices which run out of the meat during cooking. These detract microwave energy from the meat and slow down the cooking process.

Cook's notes

If you do not have a roasting rack, stand the joint on an upturned saucer in a shallow dish so that it does not rest in the fat or juices while it is cooking.



Lettuce Soup

Creamy mashed potatoes

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1.4kg / 3lb floury potatoes, quartered
100ml / 3½fl oz water
salt and pepper
75ml / 5tbls milk or milk and cream mixed
50g / 2oz butter

SERVES 6

1 Arrange the potato quarters in a large casserole. Mix the water with salt to taste and pour over the potatoes. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes, stirring the potato pieces at 5-minute intervals.
2 When all the pieces are tender, remove the dish from the cooker and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Drain thoroughly.
3 Add the milk and butter with pepper to taste, and mash thoroughly, either using a fork or a potato masher.
4 If liked, pipe through a large star nozzle for a decorative finish; or, fork the top of the potato into peaks and serve from the dish.

Hot herb tomatoes

3 mins

Standing time: none

6 firm tomatoes, about 65g / 2½oz each
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp dried sage or thyme

SERVES 6

1 Cut the tomatoes in half horizontally. Arrange the bottom halves on a large plate in a circle and sprinkle with salt, pepper and sage or thyme.

2 Replace the top halves and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until hot but not cooked. Serve with the loin of pork, glazed parsnips and creamy mashed potato.

Raspberry yoghurt fool

2½ mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz frozen raspberries
850ml / 1½pt thick Greek-style yoghurt
30-45ml / 2-3tbls caster sugar
mint leaves to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Break the raspberries up slightly and spread in the base of a 1.1L / 2pt dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until just warm, arranging and breaking up after every minute. Reserve twelve whole raspberries in a covered container in the refrigerator to use for decoration. Break up and lightly mash remaining berries.

2 Pour the yoghurt into a bowl and mix in the sugar to taste. Add the mashed raspberries, folding them into the yoghurt to leave a marbled effect. Spoon into six dessert glasses and chill until ready to serve.

3 Decorate with the reserved raspberries and mint leaves. Serve with hazelnut biscuits (see right).

VARIATION

Use 350g / 12oz frozen strawberries, defrosted and drained.

CHRIS KNAGGS

Raspberry Yoghurt Fool and Hazelnut Biscuits

Hazelnut biscuits

3 mins

Standing time: none

90ml / 6tbls plain flour
pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
40g / 1½oz butter
50g / 2oz toasted hazelnuts, coarsely ground
15ml / 1tbls water

MAKES 24

1 Sift the flour, salt and sugar into a bowl. Add the butter and rub in until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

2 Stir in the nuts, then add the water, working into a firm dough. Knead lightly on a floured surface until smooth.

3 Roll the mixture out thinly into a rectangle 15 × 25cm / 6 × 10in and cut into 24 even fingers.

4 Arrange 12 biscuits at a time on a greased microwave baking tray. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes; (500 watt, 3½ minutes) turning after 2 minutes).

5 Remove carefully with a palette knife and leave to cool on a wire rack. Repeat with the remaining 12 fingers.

Meaty one-pot casseroles

Satisfying, nutritious meals in a single pot — what could be more attractive to the busy cook? Cook up delicious, no-fuss casseroles in moments with the help of the microwave.

It is perfectly possible to provide a delicious complete meal in a single casserole which contains all the goodness your family needs. Save on energy, time and washing up with these simple, satisfying one-pot meals. They need no accompanying vegetable, but if you like, you could serve a green vegetable, such as broccoli, carrots or a crisp mixed or green salad with any of the dishes. You might like to provide some good

Chunky Stew with Dumplings

crusty bread to mop up the flavoursome juices, too.

If you are cooking for only one or two people, make up the full quantity given in the recipes and reserve half the casserole for another day. All these casseroles will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for two or three days. Reheat single portions in individual bowls or plates. Any of these dishes will also freeze successfully; why not make up a large batch and freeze some for later.

Cook's notes

Dumplings are wonderfully easy to make in the microwave, so be bold and experiment with different flavours and even colours! Use different stuffing mixes to coat the dumplings — country herb, or sage and onion, for example — or add a little paprika or turmeric. One or two tablespoons of fresh herbs are delicious too.

Chunky stew with dumplings

28¼ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb frozen stew-pack vegetables
100g / 4oz frozen peas
2 × 411g / 14½oz cans stewed steak in gravy

CRUMB MIX
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
75ml / 5tbls seasoned stuffing mix
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika

DUMPLINGS
175g / 6oz plain flour
large pinch of salt
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
90ml / 6tbls cold water

SERVES 6

1 Put the stew-pack vegetables and peas in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 13-18 minutes until almost cooked, stirring three times during cooking. Drain, add the stewed steak; microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes.

2 Make crumb mix: melt butter in a covered bowl for 15-30 seconds at 100% (High). Stir in stuffing mix and paprika.

3 Make the dumplings: sift the flour, salt and baking powder into a bowl. Rub in the butter finely and mix to a firm dough with the water. Knead lightly until smooth, then form into 10 small balls. Brush with water and roll in the crumb mix until evenly coated.

4 Arrange crumbed balls in a circle on top of stew and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until cooked through.

Microtips

The dumplings may be microwaved separately and arranged on top of the stew before serving; place the crumbed balls in a 20cm / 8in ring on greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until well risen and cooked.

Above: *Macaroni Sausage Cheese*
Left: *Hearty Beef and Bean Pot*

Macaroni sausage cheese

16 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz macaroni
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
5ml / 1tsp French mustard
salt and pepper to taste
350ml / 12fl oz milk
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
225g / 8oz pork sausagemeat
3 spring onions, sliced
45ml / 3tbls dried breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley

SERVES 4-6

1 Cook the macaroni conventionally, while microwaving sauce.

2 Put 40g / 1½oz butter in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir in the cornflour, mustard, salt and pepper, then blend in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes or until thickened, stirring after 2 minutes and then every minute. Stir in the cheese and microwave for 15 seconds.

3 Divide the sausagemeat into 16 pieces and roll into balls. Add the cooked macaroni and spring onions to the cheese sauce; transfer to a shallow dish and arrange sausage balls around edge of dish.

4 Put the remaining butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted, then stir in the breadcrumbs and parsley. Microwave the mixture at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then stir well and sprinkle the surface with the buttered crumbs. Microwave for a further 6-8 minutes until hot.

Hearty beef and bean pot

19 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

225g / 8oz frozen cut green beans
15ml / 1tbls water
225g / 8oz lean minced beef
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
275ml / ½pt hot water
50g / 2oz mushrooms, sliced
227g / 8oz can tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
½ beef stock cube, crumbled
salt and pepper to taste
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
pinch of dried oregano or thyme
pinch of garlic powder

SERVES 4

1 Put the cut green beans and water into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until tender, stirring once. Drain and set aside.

2 In a large casserole, combine the minced beef, celery and onion; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring once. Drain off any excess fat.

3 Add the green beans and all the remaining ingredients; break up tomatoes with a spoon, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes or until cooked through and thoroughly heated, stirring three times during cooking. Leave the soup to stand for 3-5 minutes.

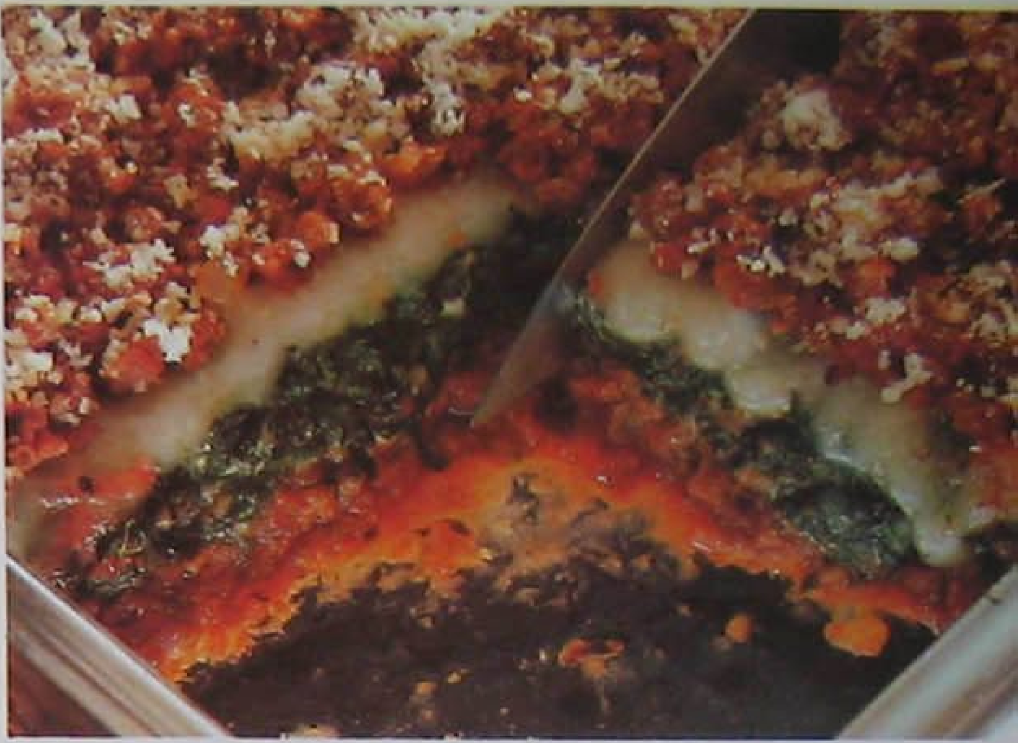
VARIATIONS

Substitute half the green beans with fresh yellow wax beans, topped, tailed and chopped.

Spinach cheese bake

22 mins

Standing time: 3 mins



275g / 10oz frozen spinach
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 × 240g / 8½oz jars bolognese sauce
120ml / 8tbls dried breadcrumbs
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
1 egg
pepper to taste
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4-6

VARIATION
Substitute Italian tomato sauce for the bolognese sauce.

How to microwave Spinach cheese bake

Microwave *the frozen spinach either in the vented packet, or in a covered bowl, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thawed. Drain spinach thoroughly and keep on one side.*

Put *beef, onion and garlic in a casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring twice during cooking to break up meat. Drain off fat from the mixture.*

Add *the bolognese sauce to mince mixture, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking. Stir in half the breadcrumbs and set aside.*

Combine *the thawed and drained spinach, cottage cheese, egg, pepper to taste and remaining breadcrumbs in a bowl and mix well together until thoroughly combined.*

Spread *half the meat mixture in a 23cm / 9in square, shallow dish. Cover with the spinach mixture, sprinkle with cheese and top with the remaining meat. Sprinkle with Parmesan.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 7-10 minutes, or until heated, rotating dish once. Stand for 3 minutes.*

RAY DUNS

Oriental casserole

21 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

225g / 8oz frozen cut green beans
15ml / 1tbls water
225g / 8oz fresh beansprouts
290g / 10.2oz can cream of chicken soup
230g / 8oz can sliced water chestnuts, drained
6 spring onions, sliced diagonally
½ green pepper, seeded and very finely sliced
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
salt and pepper to taste
4 loin pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, fat trimmed off
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce

SERVES 4

1 Put the cut green beans and water in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes to thaw, stirring once.

2 In a 25 × 20cm / 10 × 8in dish, combine the beansprouts, soup, green beans, water chestnuts, half the spring onions, the sliced pepper, ginger and seasonings.

3 Brush the pork chops on both sides with the soy sauce, then arrange on top of the mixture, placing the meatiest portions to the outside. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes. Rearrange chops and stir vegetable mixture, then recover.

4 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 10-20 minutes until meat is no longer pink, half turning the dish once.

5 Uncover, sprinkle chops with the remaining spring onions and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes to heat through. Let stand for 2 minutes.

Oriental Pork Casserole

Slimmer's notes

Substitute low-calorie chicken and vegetable soup for the cream of chicken soup. This gives only 305Cal / 1280kJ per serving. The mixture will be thinner, but the dish will be equally delicious.